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CALGARY metro®

NEWS WORTH SHARING.

Fifty Shades and Valentine's Day:

The heat is on

PAGES 33, 42, 43, 51

No Metro on Monday

Metro won't be publishing on Family Day, but look for us again on Tuesday

Dash cams growing on drivers

Safety. Video evidence may help verify facts after a collision

MORGAN MODJESKI
morgan.modjeski@metronews.ca

James Porter has captured many close calls on his dash camera, and now he's moderating an online community where fellow dash-camera users can share their videos as both a way to entertain and educate fellow drivers. MORGAN MODJESKI/METRO

On a video posted to YouTube, it's a normal-looking scene at the intersection of 40 Avenue NW and Crowchild Trail NW, but then poor timing and what appears to be a misguided left-turn causes two cars to collide, sending one into a full 180-degree spin.

"We caught that," a voice says.

That voice belongs to James Porter, a Calgary resident who has been moderating a small online community where Calgarians can share footage captured by their dashboard cameras.

Porter said he has seen many close calls while driving on city streets and he hopes posting his footage online will give people a different perspective on poor driving.

"I don't expect everybody to be 100 per cent perfect drivers" he said.

"We all make mistakes. But some people, when they do these things, they don't realize how close that accident could have been, or how their behaviour affected other people around them.

"It's nice to share these things so we can see as viewers and say, 'look, these are the small things that if you're more aware (of), then the roads would be a little bit safer."

Porter, like many others who use dash cams, have the devices for peace of mind, but the practice of posting the footage online has become commonplace.

While the videos can be both entertaining and frightening in nature, Heather Mack, with the Insurance Bureau of Canada, said the footage could be an important tool following a crash.

"Dash-cam footage would definitely be very helpful," she said, noting motorists are always encouraged to get as much documentation as possible.

"If you, for example, felt that you were not at fault, you have that evidence to show to your insurer and that can protect you in a way."

Traffic officials with the Calgary police say while a camera may assist them, even with a video, a full investigation needs to occur.

Samuel Scorah, managing partner with camera retailer, Calgary Dash Camera, said he's seen demand for the devices amongst the public increase in recent years, noting he feels perceptions around portable cameras are changing.

"I definitely think that it started off as a fad, now its getting more into a necessity in people's vehicles," Scorah said.

"I think the fleet and commercial aspect ... it's already a necessity.

"For the everyday consumer, it's getting there, but we find that people still need the incentive — which is unfortunately an accident — to actually purchase a dash camera."

Units available at time of purchase may not be as depicted. See dealer for completed details. All loyalty discounts included in the represented percentage. Customer must qualify to take full advantage.

NEWS 1

Venue leaves couple at the altar after sudden closure

Wedding plans. Newly-engaged pair lose their space — and their $1,000 deposit — after surprise shutdown of the Chicago Chophouse

Michael Golec and Maria Mikhalchenko say they aren't able to put a deposit on a new wedding venue until they have their $1,000 returned from the ex-owners of the Chicago Chophouse. JENNIFER FRIESEN/FOR METRO

Since last August, every time Maria Mikhalchenko and Michael Golec would pass by the Chicago Chophouse on the way downtown, they would feel a twinge of excitement.

The newly engaged couple had booked the restaurant as part of their wedding plans for this August. After walking into the building for the first time, they thought: This is it.

"It was so beautiful, we just fell in love with it right away," said Mikhalchenko.

Unfortunately, the excitement was short-lived.

In a flash decision, owners Adam and Victoria Dalsin decided to close the restaurant's doors on Feb. 1.

Two days later, Mikhalchenko, 25, received an email from management telling them the news. She inquired about their $1,000 deposit, but received no answers. She called, emailed, sent Facebook and LinkedIn messages, but the initial email was the last the couple heard from the company.

"It was the lack of response that made us panic," said Mikhalchenko.

The Chicago Chophouse moved locations to the Burns Building on Stephen Avenue last year — which, Adam Dalsin said, is when business took a turn for the worse.

"We put every single penny we had into it," he said in an interview with Metro last week. "We took a risk by moving it and plopping it into another location. Sometimes risks don't pay off, and here we are."

He said he and his wife tried to wait for business to pick up, but after the economy took a hit, January proved to be "the final nail in the coffin."

Last Thursday, Adam told Metro that he would be in contact with Mikhalchenko within 24 hours and would try to help her find a new venue.

However, a week later, Mikhalchenko is still left without answers.

"It doesn't sound like a lot of money, but to us it's quite a bit," said Mikhalchenko. "We need the money to secure another place. It's not like we're making a lot of money."

Lisa Vettese works in sales and marketing for the Wedding Fair, where the Chicago Chophouse advertised itself as a venue in January. She said the closure of the restaurant "took her by surprise."

"Of course there was a huge downturn in the economy, but we have never experienced this before," she said. "There was no sign of any of this happening."

Metro reached out to Victoria and Adam again on Feb. 12, and Victoria responded, saying they're unable to offer a date for the deposit's return, but she did offer an apology.

Golec, 24, said that since everything has "collapsed," they're left waiting for the funds to book a new venue.

"It's very frustrating," said Mikhalchenko. "Because you want to change things for the better, you want to move on, but we're stuck wondering: How can we move on?"

JENNIFER FRIESEN/FOR METRO

Beltline committee aims to increase safety

Community. BCD hopes to revamp social environment committee to address issues of crime in the area

MORGAN MODJESKI
morgan.modjeski@metronews.ca

Hoping to shake its reputation as a criminal hotspot, the city's Beltline community is revamping its social environment committee as a way to address concerns on crime.

Home to more than 15,000 dwellings, the Beltline area is one of the city's most densely populated communities.

Kate Jones, chair of the Beltline Community District's (BCD) social environment committee, which was formed in Sept. 2014, says she is currently meeting with area stakeholders to develop methods to address issues around crime in the area.

"Safety is definitely part of what we do," Jones said.

According to data from the Calgary Police Service, Beltline leads the city in both non-domestic assaults and car thefts, and Jones said it's issues like this that they hope to tackle from a "grassroots" approach.

"That's definitely something that we can address and discuss in our group and see what we can do," she said.

"We want people to be able to walk around on a late summer night and feel safe or park their car and not worry."

Quoted

"We want people to be able to walk around on a late summer night and feel safe or park their car and not worry."

Kate Jones, chair of the BDC's social environment committee

Staff Sgt. Kyle Grant, of District 1 with Calgary police, said population densities and a concentration of bars and addictions services in the Beltline neighbourhood are contributing factors.

"It's a very unique area," he said.

"We have your professionals who come here — high-income, middle-income, low-income — the whole gamut, as well as the addicted people who are coming to access these services."

He explained the mix of populations and a concentration of surface-area parking lots used by commuters creates a "target-rich" environment for potential criminals, noting most assaults occur between those involved in the drug-trade or between people who were drinking.

"I wouldn't say the average citizen is at risk," he said.

The first meeting of the BCD's social environment committee is set for Feb. 17 and Jones said she wants to work with neighbourhood groups, police and social agencies moving forward.

Kate Jones, chair of the BCD's social environment committee, says she hopes to address crime in the Beltline community by working with area stakeholders such as Calgary police and social service agencies. MORGAN MODJESKI/METRO

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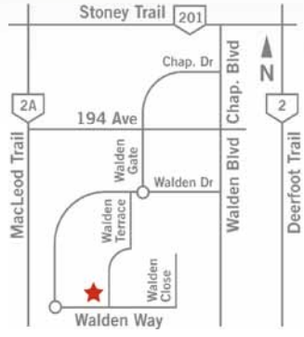

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‘Mistakes were made,’ Mountie says as High River residents sue for $5M

Gun seizures. Hundreds of firearms were improperly taken from homes during flood, lawsuit alleges

ROBSON FLETCHER
robson.fletcher@metronews.ca

Alberta’s top Mountie admitted Thursday “mistakes were made” when police seized hundreds of guns from evacuated High River homes during the 2013 flood, while affected residents filed a $5-million class-action lawsuit against the RCMP.

“I can’t say 100 per cent that what we did was flawless,” RCMP deputy Commissioner Marianne Ryan told reporters in Edmonton, in response to a watchdog report that slammed Alberta’s K Division for a lack of leadership during the crisis.

“If a homeowner is owed an apology as a result of our review, then I think we should do that,” Ryan added.

But homeowners are now after more than just words, as they filed paperwork Thursday to sue the RCMP and attorney general of Canada for “aggregate general damages” of $5 million.

The lawsuit, which has not yet been certified or proven in court, alleges Mounties failed in their “duty of care” to residents, committed “intrusion upon seclusion” that resulted in “distress, humiliation or anguish,” and violated residents’ charter rights when they forced their way into empty High River homes and seized 606 firearms “without warrants.”

“I’ve lost so much respect for them,” High River resident Don White said of the RCMP. “You can talk to pretty much anybody in High River and they’ll tell you that those police there were acting like the bloody Gestapo (during the flood).”

Federal Justice Minister and Attorney General Peter MacKay told reporters Thursday the government has “enthusiastically embraced” the watchdog report and will implement its recommendations.

MacKay also admitted “the intrusions and the property seizures that happened at High River were inappropriate.”

Don Harriman, another High River resident, said he was interviewed as part of the watchdog review and wasn’t surprised that no disciplinary measures have resulted.

“Nobody’s going to get in trouble for what they’ve done,” he said. “They don’t seem to care. They’ve got the authority to do crap like that.

“They can apologize until they’re blue in the face. It ain’t going to do a thing for nobody.”

Dennis Young, a former RCMP officer and gun-rights advocate who lives in Airdrie and has followed the case closely, filing dozens of freedom-of-information requests on the topic, said it will be difficult for the Mounties to rebuild trust in High River without someone being held accountable.

Members of the RCMP return from a boat patrol of a flooded neighborhood in High River on July 4, 2013.
JEFF MCINTOSH/THE CANADIAN PRESS

“Somebody’s got to wear this. Somebody has to be disciplined for what they did,” he said. “If they refuse to take corrective action, and I mean not just amend their policies but actually discipline the people that were in charge of this mess, then the trust will not be rebuilt for many, many years.”

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Distracted driving

Calgary MLA continues push for stricter penalties as convictions rise

Alberta saw an average of 2,159 distracted-driving convictions per month for the last year on record, up 20 per cent from the frequency of convictions prior to that, according to data from the provincial government.

The increase is evidence that the province needs to toughen the penalties for cellphone use and other distracting activities behind the wheel, according to Calgary East MLA Moe Amery, who introduced legislation late last year to do just that.

"What we have on the books is not doing its job," Amery said Thursday. "It's not a strong enough deterrent."

Bill 204 would boost the fine for distracted driving to $250, up from $172, and also see motorists slapped with three demerit points.

"I think the demerits will do the job," Amery said, adding that many people consider the current distracted-driving fine simply "the cost of doing business."

Others, however, including the Alberta Motor Association, have noted there's little available evidence that adding demerits effectively alters drivers' behaviour.

AMA spokesman Don Szarko previously told Metro the current penalties for distracted driving in Canada are "all over the map" and there ought to be more nationwide consistency.

There were 25,913 convictions for distracted driving in the province from April 2013 to March 2014, according to Alberta Transportation.

That compares to 34,303 convictions from September 2011, when the law came into force, to March 2013.

ROBSON FLETCHER/METRO

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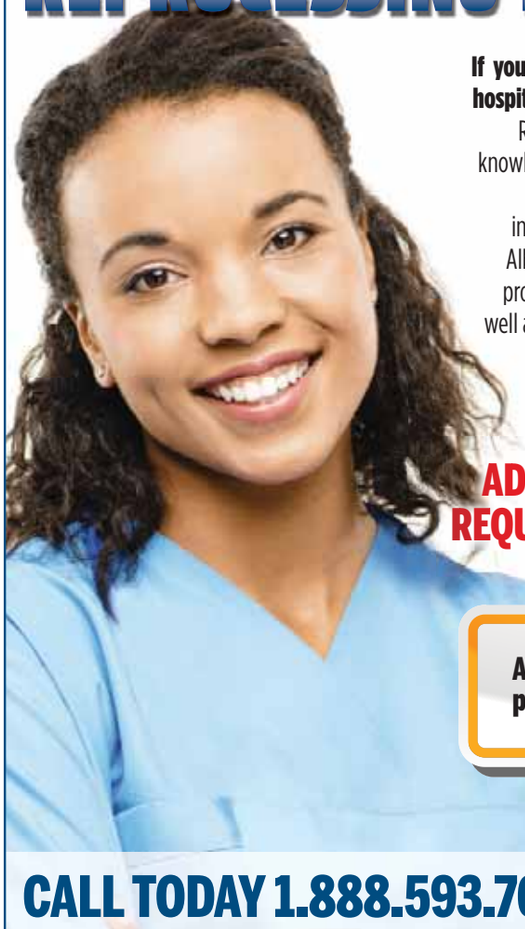

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IN DEFENCE OF
Mike Morrison
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Brutal budget

To be fair to Premier Prentice, he sort of inherited the problem. But during his campaign ... he promised no new taxes, so what exactly was his strategy to deal with the inevitable bust? His inability to plan or look at the history books has brought us to where we are today, and make no mistake: The next couple of months will be brutal.

When I was a kid, my allowance was $1. No, I wasn't raised in the 1930s, I was raised by a dad who also happened to be a bank manager.

Early on in my life, he instilled the importance of money, and even though most kids would think you couldn't do much with a dollar, he showed me how to stretch it out so that some day it would become $10, $20 or $100.

He taught me to plan ahead.

So as I look at headline after headline of the PC government yet again struggling to deal with sinking oil prices, I keep asking myself: After 40 years of rule, how come they can't figure out what my dad taught me when I was 10 years old?

On Wednesday, Finance Minister Robin Campbell announced that the government will have to slash nine per cent from its annual budget to try and stop the bleeding created by the $7-billion resource revenue shortfall. Yes, the province that could easily be the envy of governments around the world is once again crippled due to poor management.

To be fair to Premier Prentice, he sort of inherited the problem. But during his campaign for the province's top job, he promised no new taxes, so what exactly was his strategy to deal with the inevitable bust? His inability to plan or look at the history books has brought us to where we are today, and make no mistake: The next couple of months will be brutal.

This week, the government refused to restore funding to the child and youth advocate in charge of investigating deaths of children in provincial care, because who would want to investigate the deaths of children in provincial care? Then there's the on-again-off-again cancer centre. So who else will be bearing the brunt of the cuts? Well, if history repeats itself, which it definitely does in Alberta, schools, hospitals and the arts should start bracing now.

Life in Alberta can be hard, with so many people dependent on jobs in the oil industry. When it dips, and again, it always does, the government should be a source of stability, not the source of further hardship. The government has the responsibility to prepare in advance and take some of the funds and resources available during the boom and set them aside, so when things go bust, and they will go bust, we as a province are ready for it.

How's that expression go? Fool me once, shame on me. Fool me for 40 years, shame on me again? Or something like that. No one is surprised by what's happened to oil, because it always happens. So why are the PCs still pretending like they're being fooled?

Mike Morrison tweets from @mikesbloggity.

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Morale slumping at teachers' convention

Education. Instructors say they are pulling long hours, fear possible wage rollbacks

JEREMY NOLAIS
jeremy.nolais@metronews.ca

Teachers funnel in and out of the booth area of the Calgary City Teachers' Convention on Thursday at the Telus Convention Centre. JEREMY NOLAIS/METRO

The Telus Convention Centre is packed with thousands of educators from all walks — they dart into sessions discussing everything from how to properly discipline in the classroom to why girls just don't get along.

Nestled near the back, however, in one of the smaller rooms is a talk entitled "Politics of the teaching profession."

Many teachers speaking to Metro Thursday at the Calgary City Teachers' Convention say the contents of that seminar are something they'd rather ignore. But with warnings of potential rollbacks to their own wages and ever-dwindling classroom resources, it's hard to ignore the headlines.

"I have my own family to think about, children to feed," said Ellie (not her real name), a Catholic elementary teacher who took in the political talk. "I have to think about how I can provide for them."

Generally, the average teacher is urged not to talk to reporters without first receiving approval from their higher-ups, so she and many others shared their current predicament in exchange for anonymity.

Ellie is new to the full-time teaching gig and with that comes rounds of evaluations by her principals and the like. Those come on top of lesson planning, marking, speaking with parents and, of course, the actual act of instructing.

"I hope they know how busy we are," she says when asked about the provincial government, currently grappling with a multibillion-dollar deficit. The government warned Wednesday of a nine per cent reduction in departmental spending, and one of those departments is education.

A.J., a middle-school humanities teacher for the public board, reinforces the comments of his separate system peer. He arrives at school five days a week at 7 a.m. sharp in hopes of getting in his prep time — and, hopefully, avoid the prospect of carting home piles of papers to mark in the evening.

But with 160 learners spread out across six periods, the work still stacks up.

"If I give a minute to every student — and only a minute — I may have 10 minutes to lecture," he said. "You physically cannot, with that amount of students and the amount of time and constraints, get to everybody in order to meet their needs."

On Wednesday, two students at Centennial High School spoke out against the provincial government, claiming inadequate funding has put them at a disadvantage as they prepare for post-secondary. Waits for tutorial times, cramped classrooms and a lack of personal feedback on assignments and essays were among the issues cited.

But Ben, a part-time middle school teacher, said teachers have lives, too; he, for example, is caring for a newborn.

"Sometimes baby takes priority," he said.

A.J. has been to the past three teachers' conventions and said the tone is admittedly less upbeat.

"Now, it's all about ramping up, it's about getting motivated again because a lot of us are tired and we're getting burnt out. It's like, 'No, you need to realize that work you do is valuable.'"

Bail hearings should rely on Crowns, not officers: Edmonton police union

Shawn Maxwell Rehn shot and killed Const. David Wynn before turning the gun on himself. METRO FILE

A police officer who consented to bail for a career criminal — a criminal who would later kill a Mountie in Alberta — has been unfairly targeted as making a mistake, says his union.

"People were looking for answers and wanted someone's head on a plate," says Sgt. Maurice Brodeur, president of the Edmonton Police Association.

He says officers do their best acting as Crown prosecutors when an accused person is charged and first appears before justices of the peace. It's a job they've had for decades. But it's one they don't want, says Brodeur, and the union is backing a repeated call by the Edmonton police force to end the practice.

A survey by The Canadian Press of justice and Crown officials from across Canada reveals a patchwork of policies, but Alberta is the only province that mainly relies on police rather than Crowns at initial bail hearings.

Officers can release people arrested for minor crimes on promises to appear later in court. In more serious cases, suspects must be seen by judges or justices of the peace within 24 hours and can ask for bail or have their case put over and request bail later.

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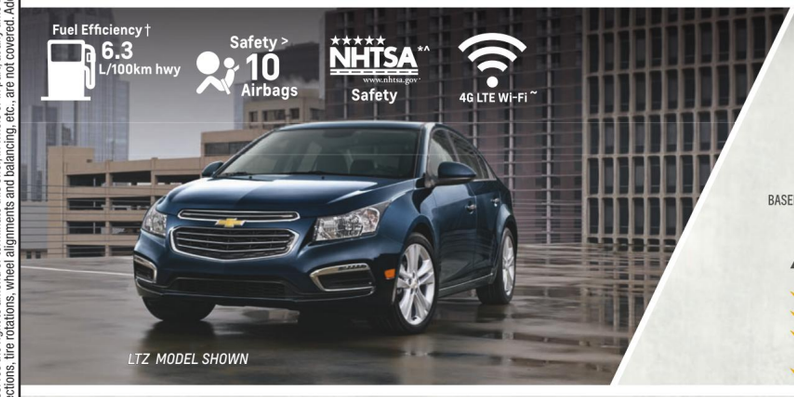

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On the lam

Police catch B.C. prison escapee

Police have arrested a 44-year-old inmate serving time for arson and manslaughter who escaped from a Vancouver Island prison on Tuesday afternoon.

Officers say Michael Sheets was found at a home in Victoria at about 10:30 p.m. Wednesday and was arrested without incident.

Assistant warden Anthony Baldo of the William Head Institution says Sheets was on an escorted absence when he escaped.

Sheets pleaded guilty and was sentenced in 2005 to more than 14 years in prison for helping firebomb a Calgary home in an arson that killed two children.

The court heard he was paid $60 and used the money to buy crack.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Poetry

Nenshi pushes Mayors' Poetry City Challenge

Three years ago, Regina's mayor Pat Fiacco started a tradition by challenging Canadian mayors to participate in the Mayor's Poetry City Challenge – and now Calgary Mayor Naheed Nenshi is taking the reins.

In recognition of World Poetry Day on Mar. 21 and National Poetry Month in April, Nenshi is challenging Canadian mayors to have a local artist recite a poem at a city council meeting in April or March.

"Two years ago, when Calgary answered the challenge, Coun. Gian-Carlo Carra and I presented two poems in council chambers," said Nenshi, announcing that local poet laureate, Derek Beaulieu, has been chosen to recite a poem for Calgary. METRO

Behind stacks of cocaine and cash, Staff Sgt. Jason Seper with ALERT, poses for a photo after law enforcement updated reporters on a massive seizure of drugs, weapons and cash. MORGAN MODJESKI/METRO

$5M-plus in drugs, weapons, cash seized

Bust. Cocaine, fentanyl, heroin, MDMA and marijuana collected by police

MORGAN MODJESKI
morgan.modjeski@metronews.ca

Armed officers watched closely as members of Alberta law enforcement gave an update on a massive seizure of drugs, weapons and money on Thursday morning.

Taken from an organized crime group allegedly distributing drugs across the province, police seized 40 kilograms of cocaine, more than 11,000 pills of fentanyl, 1.2 kg of meth and a variety of other drugs including heroin, MDMA and marijuana.

"I have 23 years of service with the RCMP and ALERT and this is the biggest drug seizure that I've ever been involved with," said Staff Sgt. Jason Seper with the Alberta Law Enforcement Response Teams (ALERT).

"We targeted all aspects of this group," Seper explained.

"The sophistication in this group ranged from major importers of cocaine, right down to the street level."

Twelve people, nine from Alberta and three from B.C., are facing a total of 66 charges covering everything from weapons offences to conspiracy.

Police say the group, which doesn't operate under a specific name, appears to be a high-level operation and note ALERT's investigation has been ongoing for a year.

Alongside the massive stash of drugs, valued at roughly $5 million, police also seized roughly $600,000 in cash, a number of weapons, five "high-end luxury vehicles" and a number of cell phones.

Even with the drugs off the street, there is more work ahead for Alberta law enforcement.

"On an investigation such as this, there's always follow-up work to be done," Seper said. "So we anticipate to review all of our evidence and if charges need to be laid, we'll lay them at this time."

The drugs were seized when members of the RCMP and the Calgary police searched seven residences in the city on Feb. 4 and police say all of the searches were executed simultaneously without incident.

Det. Collin Harris, a drug expert with the CPS drug unit said the bust was one of the largest seizures of fentanyl to-date.

This isn't our first incident with Fentanyl," he said.

"We've known it's been around for I'd say a year and a half, possibly two years in the fake Oxycodone tablet formation, but the number of incidents is very limited."

He explained while the bust is "very significant" when it comes to drugs being taken off the streets of Calgary, there are a number of groups feeding illegal narcotics into the city.

"Is this the only organization that's operating in Calgary? Absolutely not," he said, adding later, "After this one, we'll go onto the next one."

Police say while some of those arrested on Feb. 4 remain in custody, others have been released.

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Students taking on GPS watch giants

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ROBSON FLETCHER
robson.fletcher@metronews.ca

It's been a whirlwind year for Derek Rucki. The 21-year-old Mount Royal University student was just named Canada's Top Student Entrepreneur by the Entrepreneurs' Organization in Toronto.

And he and his business partner, Stefan Radeta, are about to start producing tens of thousands of ultra-lightweight GPS watches that give golfers precise yardage information at a glance on more than 30,000 courses worldwide.

"It hasn't been closed yet, but it looks like we've just received all the funding we're going to need — between a half-million and a million dollars — to actually start producing all of our inventory for May," Rucki said this week.

Metro first reported on the watch designed by Rucki, a former top-10 junior golfer on the Canadian tour, one year ago, when he had a rough prototype and a dream.

The following 12 months saw his company, TLink Golf, embark on a wild ride that has them now taking on the likes of GPS giants Garmin and Bushnell.

TLink's Bluetooth-enabled wristwatch pairs with GPS hardware in a golfer's smartphone to keep its weight down. Its cost is below $100, and its presence on a golfer's wrist is almost unnoticeable during a swing.

After winning several small entrepreneurship competitions locally and securing about $50,000 in grants and services last March, Rucki said his team finished the final product design in July and then took it to a trade show in Las Vegas in August.

"It was there where we started seeing some explosive demand for the product," he said. "After that show, we realized we were going to probably sell about 20,000 units in our first year, just through the channels we were beginning to acquire."

But TLink's unique offering didn't just catch the eyes of distributors and retailers; it also attracted the competition, and they started pursing the development of similar products.

"We knew in 18 months that our two largest competitors, meaning Bushnell and Garmin — two multi-billion-dollar companies — were going to be releasing a $99 watch, which was really our biggest differentiator," Rucki said. "So we decided about three months ago to make a pivot into a new market."

TLink partnered with a company Rucki said has "completely mastered" the customization of silicone wristbands so it can inexpensively produce specific colours and print corporate logos on the devices.

"Our big market that we're now seeing a ton of potential in is the corporate tee gift market — when companies or charities want to host a golf tournament and give their players a gift with their logo on it," Rucki said. "It turns out to be a much larger market, and with us being the only GPS player in it, period."

Through another partner, Arizona-based The Golf Tank, Rucki anticipates moving 50,000 units in the first year.

One year ago, Derek Rucki showed his prototype TLink Golf watch to Metro. Since then, the company has taken a wild ride to unexpected new heights. ROBSON FLETCHER/METRO FILE

The new TLink Golf design now features customizable colours and custom corporate logos, as the company "pivots" toward a new market. CONTRIBUTED

MRU

A new way of teaching

Ray DePaul, director of the Institute for Innovation and Entrepreneurship at Mount Royal University, said he has been "just amazed" by Rucki and Radeta as students.

"Derek's a remarkable CEO and founder but Stefan deserves just as much credit," DePaul said. "He's in the back a little bit more, but they just play off each other so well. Entrepreneurship is a team sport and they just prove it."

As part of their program, DePaul said MRU set up a custom class just for Rucki and Radeta and "acted as a board of directors" to the young entrepreneurs.

"We had them report to us on a monthly basis, and we were really driving them like a board of directors would, as opposed to how teachers would," he said.

Central library beefs up security

Four more guards. Dealing with rude patrons, theft shifted from staff to pros, say Calgary Public Library

MORGAN MODJESKI
morgan.modjeski@metronews.ca

Book thieves beware!

A jump in incidents following the floods of 2013 has resulted in an increase of security at Calgary's Central library.

Officials say during the floods, the closure of the Central Library's basement created a lack of space and tighter quarters, presenting challenges for both patrons and staff.

Partially because of the flood-related chaos, the Calgary Public Library introduced its Safe Library initiative, which saw the number of security guards at the city's largest library jump from two to six since October 2014.

Quoted

"I wasn't trained to deal with confrontational situations."

Elsa Watson

Katherine Cormack, with the Calgary Public Library says the increase has taken the job of policing disruptive or abusive patrons from library staff and placed it into the hands of professionals.

"While some of that may sort of just be like water off a duck's back for a security guard, it may not feel like that to a library staff-member," Cormack said of a patron who may act rudely or be breaking library rules.

"It's also about what you're trained to do and what you're trained to take and hear."

As part of the initiative, library rules have been made highly visible as people enter the building.

That includes a limit of two bags per patron and no disruptive use of a mobile device.

If patrons disobey, they'll have to deal with security.

"It's just putting the right people in place and the right initiatives in place to make sure that people understand what the expectations are right off the top," Cormack explained.

Elsa Watson, the supervisor of membership services at the Central Library, said she feels ramped-up security has resulted in a greater sense of comfort and safety, even as usage increases with the introduction of free library memberships in January.

"I wasn't trained to deal with confrontational situations," she said.

"By having security staff that are trained in that, that definitely makes it easier for the staff to do what they're meant to do, which is to be helping with the patrons."

Elsa Watson, the supervisor of membership services at Calgary's Central Library, said increased security allows library staff to deal with clients, rather than problematic patrons. MORGAN MODJESKI/METRO

Top Catholic trustee wants GSA debate made local

The province's top Catholic school trustee is standing behind a document produced by his organization that deems legislation concerning gay-straight alliances (GSAs) unnecessary.

"We believe that the name gay-straight alliance is narrow and we're proud of that," said Tony Sykora, president of the Alberta Catholic School Trustees' Association (ACSTA).

His comments came Thursday, one week after Metro published a story detailing a leaked document from ACSTA outlining the group's position on GSAs, which took centre-stage in the Alberta legislature during the fall session as some pushed to mandate establishment of such clubs in schools if students requested them.

The trustee document warns that such legislation would intrude on the rights of school boards and says "the implication that GSAs are the sole or only way to protect kids doesn't make sense."

But Kris Wells, co-director of the Institute for Sexual Minority Studies and Services at the University of Alberta, criticized Sykora's group for not understanding the purpose of a GSA and said it "really does draw a line in the sand" and force the government to act.

Sykora, however, was unfazed by the criticism.

"Our stance has been all along, as with many other school boards that aren't part of Catholic schools, is that decisions made at the local level are likely best," he said.

Asked whether a Catholic school club would ever actually be called a gay-straight alliance, Sykora said it wouldn't be him having the discussion with students, but rather teachers and administrators. Even still, he said "words are important."

"Our teachers are compassionate, they work with students to find the best way to deal with things," he said.

Still, some within the Catholic teaching ranks say the trustee document doesn't represent their own beliefs on the GSA matter. One Calgary elementary teacher, who spoke on condition of anonymity, said allowing such a group would "show that collectively we support people being their authentic selves."

"By excluding GSAs the (trustees are) driving a wedge between themselves and a group of their most vulnerable students," the teacher said.

Quoted

"Since you wouldn't block a Polish Students Club, what are your reasons for blocking a GSA? I'd like to know."

Grande Prairie and District Catholic school trustee Ralph Wohlgemuth in a Twitter debate with Tony Sykora

JEREMY NOLAIS/METRO

Catholic school trustee Tony Sykora TWITTER

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$50K to train those working with child victims

Funding. Organization hopes Ottawa-backed virtual classroom will help create national educational standard for professionals

Professionals working with young victims of crime will soon have a new tool.

On Thursday, Justice Minister Peter MacKay was in Calgary to announce a $50,000 grant for the Canadian Child Abuse Association (CCAA) through the Federal Victims Fund.

It will be used to develop a "user-friendly" virtual classroom to deliver training and certificate programs to police officers, victim-service workers and other professionals.

MacKay described the growing number of reported cases of child sexual assault as "shocking," citing an increase of six per cent in 2014.

He said the CCAA is a leader in addressing the issue in Canada and he hopes the funding will help it expand its reach.

"For three decades, they have been working directly with victims and their families to bring about a better life and lessen the trauma associated with this terrible scourge," he said.

"This is an organization that has championed an approach ... focused first and foremost on the needs of the victims. That victim-centric approach is what works best."

MORGAN MODJESKI/METRO

Canadian Child Abuse Association board member Stephen Johnston and Justice Minister Peter MacKay. MORGAN MODJESKI/METRO

Calgary Transit director Doug Morgan stands beside the New Year's bus. Transit decided to extend hours, giving people out partying more options to get home. METRO FILE

Transit. New Year's trial service sees 3,600 riders

Roughly 3,600 riders used Calgary Transit during its trial of extended hours on New Year's Eve, according to transit planning manager Neil McKendrick.

"We did counts on the various bus routes that were running extended services and we did some estimates based on tickets that were purchased from the LRT ticket-vending machines," McKendrick said Thursday. "Overall, we believe that we had about 3,600 people that rode the extended service between 1:30 in the morning and 3 o'clock."

Transit announced plans in December to offer the extended hours for New Year's revellers, at an estimated cost of $100,000 to run 15 three-car C-Trains and 39 buses, plus signage at each of the stops offering the extended service.

"In those costs are also included enhanced services as far as bus cleaning and peace officers," transit director Doug Morgan said at the time. "Our real concern is making sure it's attractive to customers and we get ridership. Certainly it's an investment that we have to do, and we want to make sure it's useful."

McKendrick figured the ridership was high enough to justify offering extended hours again next New Year's Eve, unless Calgary Transit runs into unexpected budget problems between now and then.

"We carried 3,600 people who normally would have had to probably either walk or drive, perhaps — and that isn't great — or try to find a taxi," he said.

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Budget. Albertans not OK with cuts as another oil boom goes bust, says NDP

The Alberta NDP says Premier Jim Prentice will find Albertans less forgiving the second time around if he wants to slash his way out of low oil prices.

New Democrat Brian Mason says people remember job losses and service cuts when former premier Ralph Klein pared budgets to the bone to address deficits in the 1990s.

"Anyone that was around during that period will remember the pain, will remember the terrible cuts to our services, the losses of jobs, losses of homes (and the) breakup of families," Mason said Thursday.

"People accepted it then because they thought it was a first-time occurrence, something that we just weren't expecting and we needed to deal with."

But for the next two decades a succession of Progressive Conservative governments have promised, but failed, to disconnect Alberta's day-to-day spending from volatile oil prices, Mason said.

"It's been entirely predictable. The government has had nearly 20 years to fix things so that it never happened again, so I don't think that Albertans are prepared to accept the kind of strong medicine that Jim Prentice is trying to administer."

On Wednesday, Finance Minister Robin Campbell announced there will be a nine per cent cut in departmental spending across the board in next year's budget, which is to be tabled in March.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

No surprise

Premier Jim Prentice has warned for months that strong steps must be taken to combat low oil prices that have taken an estimated $7 billion out of the provincial budget.

Catholic school nixed, so public board steps in

Seton high school.
Provincial funding still needed to move forward

JEREMY NOLAIS
jeremy.nolais@metronews.ca

There may be hope yet for Catholic families caught up in a school snafu in Calgary's Seton area — if they're willing to make the jump to the public system, that is.

A long-awaited separate high school for the developing deep-south neighbourhood was suddenly moved across the Bow River to the community of Legacy amid concerns about site readiness. The Calgary Catholic School District concedes the transfer isn't ideal for families living near Seton, but said it was the only option to ensure the school would be ready for students by late 2017.

But it just so happens the Calgary Board of Education is planning its own high school in Seton. While the public system's site is adjacent to the community and already has proper servicing — roads, pipes and so — it lacks something the Catholic school has: money to build.

"We are ready to go with construction immediately if the funding came about," said Frank Coppinger, the CBE's superintendent of facilities. He noted that an announcement of the school by the province in October only allotted funds for design in a bid to speed up actual construction when it comes time.

"Theoretically, it would open in September 2018 subject to funding being provided by the government for construction, and that hasn't come forward yet," Coppinger said.

Sue Zucchelli lives in Auburn Bay, located directly north of Seton, and had hoped to send three of her kids to the anticipated Catholic school. Now, there are fears that families in that neighbourhood won't even be guaranteed spots in the Legacy facility and an MLA said they could be bussed 30 minutes north to Forest Lawn instead.

Sue Zucchelli is seen with twin daughters Lily, left, and Tulia. She had hoped to send the pair to a Catholic high school originally planned for Seton. METRO FILE

Zucchelli said she was aware of plans for a public high school in Seton as well, but didn't know it could come so soon.

"They could walk to a public school then," she said. "So, I can't say for sure I would send them there, but it's very appealing."

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College-level vet training at Catholic school district

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Program part of larger provincial dual-credit strategy

JEREMY NOLAIS
jeremy.nolais@metronews.ca

Calgary Catholic students will soon have the chance to learn how to do everything from properly trim Fido's toenails to read Whiskers' X-ray results.

Olds College is teaming up with the Calgary Catholic School District to offer a 25-credit veterinary technical assistant program, one that will allow learners to earn a certificate that deems them ready for work upon graduation.

"We're working hard to provide a variety of opportunities for high school students to be able to give them a jump on career planning and a head start on what they want to pursue in post-secondary education," said Catholic district spokeswoman Tania Younker. "This is essentially a program they can take after high school for $3,700 through Olds College, but they're that much further ahead if they take it through high school."

Calgary Catholic School District students will soon get to join Olds College students like this one in earning training as a veterinary technical assistant. CONTRIBUTED

The program will start with 24 students in September and will include training on how to care for an animal from the moment they enter a veterinarian's office to the point they are discharged from surgery.

Both the Catholic district and Calgary Board of Education have pursued dual-credit offerings in recent years in a bid to provide students with more real-world experience before crossing the graduation-day stage.

Barb Mulholland, director of learning for Olds College's community learning campus, said this fall will mark the first time her school has offered its veterinary training as a dual-credit course.

"I would say it's quite in demand," she said of the program. "Certainly, our students at Olds College find employment and enjoy working in the industry."

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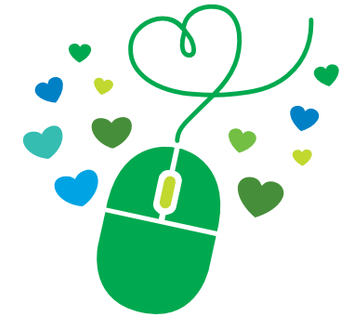

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PM's flag shindig backfired

Lester B. Pearson was so delighted by his pick for a potential new Canadian flag that the Liberal prime minister summoned some journalists to 24 Sussex Drive in the summer of 1964 to show it off.

"He was like a boy with a new bicycle," Toronto Telegram reporter Ron Collister is quoted as saying in the 1968 book Assignment Ottawa by colleague Peter Dempson.

About a dozen reporters were invited to enjoy a cup of tea with Pearson at 24 Sussex in July '64 and watch him unfurl his choice for the new flag, dubbed the Pearson Pennant.

As the reporters left, however, Pearson told them there was a catch to the visit — any stories about his pick for the design would have to be attributed to a "reliable source," not the prime minister himself.

Of the final three flag designs considered in 1964 to replace Canada's red ensign, this one was prime minister Lester B. Pearson's favourite. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Dempson's book recalls how Toronto Star Weekly reporter Walter Stewart, a relative newcomer to the press gallery, balked, uncomfortable with the idea of writing a positive story about Pearson's flag design without naming the source.

He subsequently identified Pearson as the source of the story and wrote of the visit to 24 Sussex, infuriating the prime minister to such an extent that instructions were issued to staff to deny Stewart any information in the future.

Other members of the press who weren't invited to the flag shindig were miffed that the prime minister had played favourites. THE CANADIAN PRESS

How to handle a flag

Here are some guidelines about the Maple Leaf from Canadian Heritage:

1. The flag should "be displayed only in a manner befitting this important national symbol; it should not be subjected to indignity or displayed in a position inferior to any other flag."

2. It should not be used as a table cloth or seat cover, or "as a barrier on a dais."

3. Nothing should be pinned to or sewn onto the flag. It should not be signed or marked in any way.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

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Flag first met with heckling, caused bitter national brawl

50th birthday. Canada prepares to celebrate now-beloved Maple Leaf flag this Sunday

A Canadian flag flies in the wind at Granville Island in Vancouver, B.C. Sunday marks 50 years since the now-beloved Maple Leaf flag was adopted. DARRYL DYCK/THE CANADIAN PRESS

When Lester B. Pearson unveiled his top pick for a new Canadian flag at a Winnipeg legion hall in July 1964, he was met with boos, hisses and heckling from veterans who accused him of selling out Canada to the "pea soupers."

The Liberal prime minister had campaigned a year earlier on replacing the Red Ensign — the country's unofficial flag that paired Canada's coat of arms and the Union Jack — with a uniquely Canadian emblem as the 1967 centennial approached.

As Canada prepares to celebrate its now-beloved flag's 50th birthday on Sunday, the national brawl that erupted as Pearson forged ahead with his plans is a distant memory.

"It was the debate, the issue," said Conservative Sen. Marjory LeBreton, who worked in opposition leader John Diefenbaker's office as the battle raged on. In a recent interview, LeBreton pointed out that Canada's military veterans had fought under the Red Ensign in two world wars — one of which had only ended 20 years earlier.

Nonetheless, young Canadians argued with their parents about the need for a new flag; one would-be designer even submitted a flag proposal festooned with John, Paul, George and Ringo as Beatlemania gripped North America.

Some English-Canadians, meantime, accused French-Canadians — the aforementioned "pea soupers" — of being behind the push to cut Canada's ties to Great Britain even as one Quebec MP, Pierre Trudeau, sniffed that Quebecers didn't give a "tinker's damn" about a new flag.

Just a few months after Pearson's PR disaster in Winnipeg, however, he managed to convince a majority of parliamentarians — including Conservatives — to vote in favour of the red Maple Leaf chosen by his flag selection committee as the new official emblem.

It wasn't the flag he liked best and had displayed to the angry legion members that summer. The so-called Pearson Pennant, a sprig of three red maple leaves bordered by blue bars, ultimately lost out to the flag Canadians know today.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Joan O'Malley

Sewing a piece of Canadian history

Five decades ago, a young Joan O'Malley was summoned by her father one snowy November night to sew Canada's first Maple Leaf flag.

On the flag's 50th birthday this Sunday, she'll be celebrating with as many as 900 other snowbirds at a party in Panama City Beach, Fla. where she's sure to be belle of the ball.

"I remember thinking it was beautiful, and wondering: 'Why shouldn't Canada have its own flag?'" said O'Malley. "The maple leaf was a symbol all Canadians recognized, and that flag was stunning, as far as I was concerned. I loved it."

THE CANADIAN PRESS

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Iraq. Canadian troops in fourth firefight with ISIL

Canadian troops were recently involved in another exchange of fire with extremists in northern Iraq, a skirmish that comes as the U.S. prepares to expand the scope of its special forces missions throughout the region.

A draft resolution before the U.S. Congress would, if passed, authorize "ground combat operations in limited circumstances" and special forces missions targeting leaders of the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL). That will put pressure on the Harper government as it prepares to renew Canada's commitment to the combat mission against ISIL, defence experts said Thursday.

Capt. Paul Forget, a spokesman for the country's joint operations command, refused to provide details on the latest episode, citing operational security. But Forget did say it was similar to three previous gun battles in which Canadian troops returned fire while visiting the front line during a planning exercise.

There were no Canadian casualties, he said. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Citizenship ceremonies

Harper vows to fight court order lifting veil ban

Vowing to appeal a federal court decision that allows citizenship candidates to wear face coverings at swearing-in ceremonies, Prime Minister Stephen Harper says it's "offensive" that someone would want to hide their identity "at the very moment where they are committing to join the Canadian family."

In a ruling last Friday, the Federal Court of Canada said it is "unlawful" for the government to mandate new citizens to remove the veil while taking the oath because it violates the country's own immigration law, which gives citizenship judges the discretionary power to accommodate religious needs.

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

'A step in the right direction' for jailed Canadian journalist

Egypt. A judge ordered Mohamed Fahmy released on bail pending a retrial on terror-related charges

Al Jazeera journalist, Canadian-Egyptian Mohamed Fahmy, left, arrives at court in Cairo for his retrial on Thursday. Fahmy and a colleague were ordered released on bail pending their retrial. GETTY IMAGES

Prime Minister Stephen Harper says the federal government will continue to press for the release of Canadian journalist Mohamed Fahmy and he is optimistic the case will be resolved.

Fahmy, a Canadian journalist who has spent more than a year in a Cairo prison, was ordered released on bail by an Egyptian court on Thursday pending a retrial on terror-related charges. His case returns to court on Feb. 23.

Fahmy's supporters have been critical of Harper's involvement, imploring him to intervene directly in Fahmy's case with Egyptian President Abdel Fattah el-Sissi.

Asked Thursday whether he'd spoken directly to el-Sissi, Harper wouldn't say so directly, but did suggest he'd been in touch with his Egyptian counterpart.

"Our government has for sometime now has been in contact with Egyptian authorities at all levels, including my level," Harper said.

The unexpected development prompted expressions of jubilation from Fahmy's family, although the 40-year-old's legal battles aren't quite over yet.

"We're extremely happy because it's unbelievable to have your brother back after 14 months, especially with such injustice and all the pain he's endured," said Fahmy's brother, Adel Fahmy. "We still want full exoneration, if not, then deportation, and we still want Canada to pressure hard, but it was a step in the right direction."

Fahmy was the only defendant who was ordered to pay an amount equivalent to about $41,000 for his release on bail, as he was considered a flight risk.

His family paid that amount within hours of the court hearing but were told it would take until Saturday for paperwork to be processed for Fahmy to leave prison.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Quoted

"We still feel that the Canadian government is not applying the sufficient pressure."

Adel Fahmy, Mohamed Fahmy's brother

United Kingdom

Signs of turmoil at charity promoting Canada

Historian Margaret MacMillan and think-tank adviser Diana Carney are among four people who have quit the board of a charitable foundation that promotes Canada in Britain, amid allegations of meddling by the Canadian High Commission.

MacMillan said it's clear the high commission plans to take over the Foundation for Canadian Studies in the United Kingdom with the aim of promoting Canada's interests as it sees fit. The organization, a British charity with an endowment of about $2.3 million, was established in 1975 to support teaching, research and publishing about Canada in the U.K., as well as foster academic ties and student exchanges between Canadian and British universities.

In a December letter to the board, High Commissioner Gordon Campbell outlined plans to exercise the commission's right to appoint four new board members.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Doctors hopeful second twin girl will find liver donor soon

Health. Doctor says over 400 potential donors have come forward

Several potential organ donors are undergoing tests at a Toronto hospital and doctors say they are hopeful they will soon find a match for a little girl who needs a new liver to survive.

Three-year-old Phuoc Wagner, who has Alagille syndrome, a genetic disorder that affects vital organs, received a part of her father's liver Tuesday, but her twin sister Binh, who suffers from the same condition, is still waiting for a donor.

Johanne Wagner holds her daughter Phuoc before the three-year-old's liver transplant Tuesday. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Dr. Gary Levy, who runs the liver donor program at Toronto General Hospital, said Phuoc and her father, Michael Wagner, are "recovering well" following the surgeries.

He said more than 400 potential donors have come forward since the Kingston, Ont., family made a public plea last month and he hopes a donor match for Binh is close.

"We anticipate that within the next short while, seven to 14 days, we will define several individuals who can step forward to be the donor for Binh," Levy said. THE CANADIAN PRESS

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New peace deal set for Ukraine

Negotiations.
Ceasefire effective starting 5 p.m. EST Saturday with special status for rebel regions

Guns will fall silent, heavy weapons will pull back from the front, and Ukraine will trade a broad autonomy for the east for control of the Russian border by the end of the year under a peace deal hammered out Thursday in all-night negotiations between Russia, Ukraine, France and Germany.

The deal was full of potential pitfalls, however, that could derail its implementation. In announcing the plan, Russia and Ukraine disagreed over what exactly they had agreed to in marathon 16-hour talks, including the status of a key town under rebel siege.

Russian President Vladimir Putin told reporters that the agreement envisages a cease-fire that will be effective starting from the start of the day Sunday (5 p.m. EST Saturday) as well as a special status for the rebel regions, provisions on border controls and humanitarian issues.

Ukrainian President Petro Poroshenko said there was no agreement on any autonomy for eastern Ukraine, a longtime demand of Russia that wants it to maintain leverage over its neighbour and prevent it from joining NATO.

However, the deal requires Ukrainian parliament to give wide powers to the eastern regions as a condition for restoring Ukraine's full control over the border — a provision certain to trigger heated political debate in Ukraine.

The agreement is a compromise allowing both Russia and Ukraine to claim victory, but it's full of potential pitfalls that may derail it.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Women mourn deaths of three shot over parking spaces

Female mourners gather for the funerals of Deah Shaddy Barakat, 23; his 21-year-old wife of less than two months, Yusor Mohammad Abu-Salha; and her 19-year-old sister, Razan Mohammad Abu-Salha, at the Method Road Soccer Complex Thursday, on the North Carolina State campus in Raleigh, N.C. The three were shot to death Tuesday, in what police described as a long-standing argument over parking spaces at the condominium complex where Barakat had lived for more than a year. COREY LOWENSTEIN/THE NEWS & OBSERVER/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

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Police officer charged with murder in Colorado small town shooting

Rocky Ford. James Ashby first Colorado police officer to face charges for an on-duty shooting in 20 years

Many in Rocky Ford, a small town on Colorado's southeastern plains, wave at police driving by and sometimes stop to give officers crime tips. People under arrest are also neighbours an officer could run into later in the grocery store, so Chief Frank Gallegos encourages his eight-person force to treat suspects with respect.

So when a police officer on the job for five months stopped a 27-year-old resident skateboarding along the main drag, followed him to his home and shot him dead last fall, Rocky Ford's residents were shocked and angry.

People marched, demanding justice for Jack Jacquez — though police are quick to point out that there were no arrests or property damage like that seen in Ferguson, Mo. after the shooting death there of Michael Brown.

What happened next also differed from Ferguson and many other communities that have had recent police shootings: Officer James Ashby was charged with second-degree, non-premeditated murder after an investigation led by law enforcement from surrounding communities and the Colorado Bureau of Investigation.

The outsourcing of the investigation and initial sealing of court documents upset many. But last month, when a judge ruled there was enough evidence for Ashby to stand trial, the investigators' findings became public and confirmed an early claim by Jack Jacquez's mother, Viola, that her son was shot in the back on Oct. 12 as she watched in their kitchen.

Jackie Jacquez-Lindenmuth and her mother, Viola, look over a memorial to her brother Jack Jacquez, who died after being shot by Rocky Ford, Colo., police officer James Ashby last year. SOLOMON BANDA/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Ashby told investigators that Jacquez mouthed off to him when he stopped him skateboarding on U.S. Highway 50. Ashby said he thought Jacquez was trying to burglarize what turned out to be his own home because he walked erratically before heading toward the home's back entrance. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

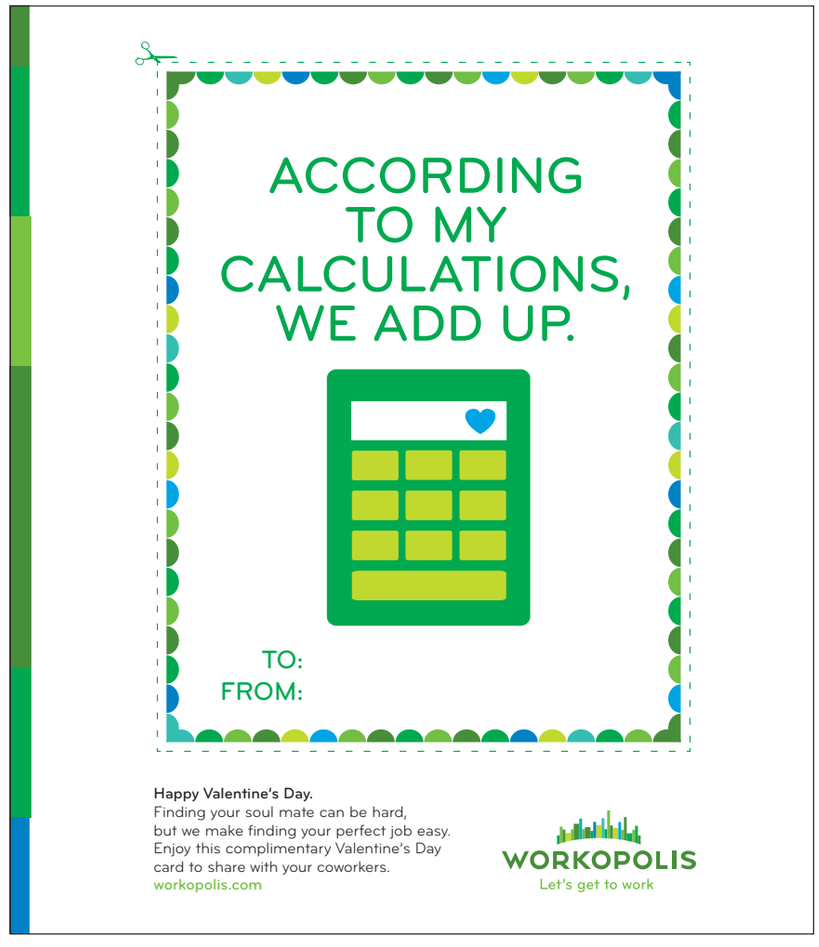
Race relations

U.S. at crossroads, FBI boss says

The United States is at a crossroads on matters of race relations and law enforcement, presenting "hard truths" that its citizens and police must confront, FBI Director James Comey said Thursday.

One of the issues is that police officers who work in neighbourhoods where most street crime is committed by young black men may hold unconscious biases. But another truth is that minorities in poor neighbourhoods too often inherit a "legacy of crime and prison," a cycle he said must be broken.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS



Chinese relatives protest in Malaysia over missing plane

Flight MH370. Officials in Kuala Lumpur say declaration lost plane was an accident was intended to allow families to move on

Chinese relatives of passengers on a missing Malaysia Airlines flight protested Thursday outside the carrier's office, urging Malaysia to rescind a declaration that all on board have perished.

Flight 370, which disappeared last March 8 while flying from Kuala Lumpur to Beijing, is believed to have crashed in the southern Indian Ocean off Australia. A search is ongoing but no confirmed debris has been found.

Malaysia's government on Jan. 29 formally declared the plane an accident and said all 239 people on board were presumed dead, paving the way for compensation claims. It upset victims' families, who are still waiting for evidence of the plane's fate.

Transport Minister Liow Tiong Lai assured the relatives that the international search will continue.

Fifteen Chinese relatives of passengers arrived Wednesday in Malaysia to demand answers, and more are expected to arrive before the Lunar New Year. Most of the passengers were from China.

Wearing red T-shirts with the words "Pray for MH370," they held posters outside the airline's office reading, "Who can tell us what happened?" THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Quoted

"I cannot accept it. Where is the debris? Where are the bodies? Nothing is found, why declare it an accident?"

Wang Rung Xiang, 58. Her only son, Hou Bo, 35, was on the plane.

An unidentified Chinese family member of a passenger on board the missing Malaysia Airlines flight MH370 protests outside the Malaysia Airlines office in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, on Thursday. JOSHUA PAUL/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

EU. Leaders debate new anti-terror measures

Galvanized by the recent terror attacks in France, European Union leaders on Thursday debated a range of ambitious steps to better protect their 28 nations, including exchanging airliner passenger manifests, tightening controls at the border and combating extremism on the Internet.

On Wednesday, European Parliament members, by a 532-136 vote, pledged to work toward getting a passenger name record program enacted by the end of 2015. An earlier attempt died in 2013 when a committee rejected it on civil liberty grounds.

Gilles De Kerchove, the EU's counter-terrorism chief, has called for the swift implementation of a new screening system to detect suspicious travel movements, and suggested it is also time to change some of the rules governing the "Schengen area," where 26 European countries, among them 22 EU nations, have abolished passport and customs controls among one another.

The EU leaders were expected to consider better co-ordination among existing institutions like Europol, Eurojust — the EU-wide agency of prosecutors, police and investigating magistrates — and the bloc's counter-terrorism co-ordinator. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Paris attacks

ISIL interviews wanted widow

The Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant published what it described as an interview with the widow of the French gunman who attacked a kosher supermarket and a police officer in Paris last month, claiming for the first time that she was among extremist fighters.

The text interviews did not directly name Hayat Boumeddiene or show images of her, instead identifying her only as the wife of Amedy Coulibaly, or Umm Basur al-Muhajirah.

Alabama. County ordered to start issuing same-sex marriage licenses

The federal judge who overturned Alabama's gay marriage ban ordered a defiant county to begin issuing marriage licenses to same-sex couples, signalling to judges across the state that they should do the same.

U.S. District Judge Callie Granade directed Mobile County to begin issuing the licenses, saying a judge there had no reason to deny them after she ruled Alabama's ban on gay marriage was unconstitutional. Granade's ruling went into effect Monday after the U.S. Supreme Court refused the conservative southern state's request to stop the marriages. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

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KAREN ROSYCHUK
Human Resources Manager
krosychuk@chandos.com

YOUR PASSPORT TO SAVINGS
THE HONDA FIVE DAY SEAT SALE IS ON!
VILLAGE HONDA

Kellogg's announces fourth quarter sales decline

Kellogg's Special K cereal boxes are displayed on a grocery store shelf in Omaha, Neb. The cereal brand can't shake its outdated image among weight watchers; Kellogg's said Thursday its U.S. cereal unit suffered another sales decline in its last quarter, hurt by the performance of its top moneymaker. CEO John Bryant said people are no longer focused on holding back calories and want foods that make them feel good.

NATI HARNIK, FILE/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Facebook to let users choose 'legacy contact'

Social media. With hundreds of thousands making memorial requests for deceased loved ones, company's latest move gives users more choice

The world's biggest online social network said Thursday that it will now let users pick someone who can manage their accounts after they die. Previously, the accounts were "memorialized" after death, or locked so that no one could log in.

But Facebook says its users wanted more choice. Beginning in the U.S., Facebook users can now pick a "legacy contact" to post on their pages after they die, respond to new friend requests and update their profile picture and cover photo. Users can also have their accounts deleted after their death, which was not possible before.

If you want someone to manage your account after you die, click on the upside-down triangle on the top right corner of your page and find "security settings."

For U.S. users there will be an option to edit your legacy contact, who must be a Facebook user. But you don't have to pick someone else to manage your account.

You can also check a box to permanently delete your account when you die.

The person you decide will manage your Facebook account won't be notified of your choice until your Facebook account is memorialized. But you can choose to send them a message right away. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Online memorial

To memorialize a Facebook account, a loved one would provide proof of the person's death, such as an obituary.

- **Search result management.** Once notified, Facebook will work to ensure that a deceased user no longer shows up in searches or as a suggested friend.
- **Memorialized accounts.** Facebook wouldn't confirm how many accounts have been memorialized on the site boasting more than 1.4 billion users, but company product manager Vanessa Callison-Burch said they receive requests from hundreds of thousands of loved ones to do so.

Market Minute

DOLLAR 80.06¢ (+0.95)

TSX 15,228.52 (+77.02)

OIL $51.21 US (+$2.37)

GOLD $1,220.70 US (+$1.10)

Natural gas: $2.713 (-8.4¢)
Dow Jones: 17,972.38 (+110.24)

'Nut rage.' Korean heiress gets jail time

An onboard tantrum dubbed "nut rage" culminated Thursday in a one-year prison sentence for Korean Air heiress Cho Hyun-ah, a humiliating rebuke that only partially quelled public outrage at the excesses of South Korea's business elite.

Cho, the daughter of Korean Air's chairman, achieved worldwide notoriety after she ordered the chief flight attendant off a Dec. 5 flight, forcing it to return to the gate at John F. Kennedy Airport in New York.

Cho was angered she had been offered macadamia nuts in a bag instead of on a dish.

A Seoul court said Cho, 40, was guilty of forcing a flight to change its route, obstructing the flight's captain in the performance of his duties, forcing a crew member off a plane and assaulting a crew member. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Media

Sun News to shut network down permanently

The Sun News Network will be going off the air on Friday morning, according to several media reports. There are about 200 people who work at Sun News, according to CBC, which first reported the story.

Representatives of the Sun News Network and Quebecor could not be immediately reached for comment.

The controversial television channel was not included in the $316-million deal that saw 175 Sun Media English-language newspapers sold from Quebecor to Postmedia in October 2014. TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Oil prices

Cenovus to cut jobs amid decline

A steep drop in oil prices has led oilsands producer Cenovus Energy to consider cutting 15 per cent of its labour, amounting to 800 jobs. THE CANADIAN PRESS

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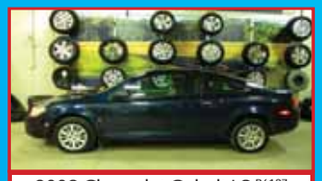
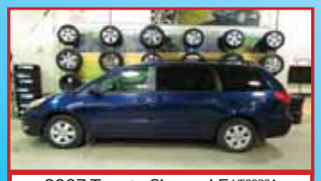


2009 Chevrolet Cobalt LS B6127
43,129 km • Auto • CD • 4 Speakers
$8,494

2009 Toyota Yaris B6104
127,310 km • Auto • Power Locks • CD
$9,173

2009 Nissan Sentra SE-R B6074
88,942 km • 6-Sp. Manual • Keyless Ent. • Cruise
$12,399



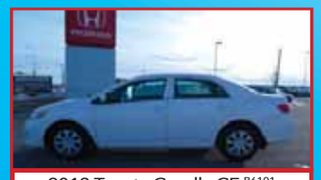
2007 Toyota Sienna LE VF0092A
110,437 km • Keyless Entry • Cruise • A/C
$12,494

2012 Fiat 500 Sport B6083
36,910 km • Automatic • Sunroof • Bluetooth
$12,494

2009 Mazda 5 GT B6108
121,368 km • Auto Temp • Leather • Sunroof
$12,494

2007 Mazda 6 GT B6107
98,727 km • Manual • Sunroof • Leather • Cruise
$13,494

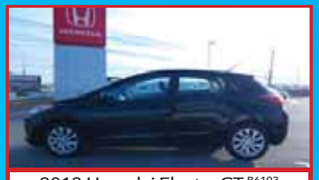
2010 Hyundai Genesis B6020
86,000 km • Bluetooth • Leather • Alloys
$14,494



2013 Toyota Corolla CE B6101
63,800 km • Auto • Power Mirrors • AM/FM CD
$14,799

2013 Buick Verano B6145
40,120 km • Auto • Cruise • Keyless Entry
$15,499

2010 Ford Escape XLT B6134
90,698 km • Cruise • A/C • Power Locks
$15,765



2013 Hyundai Elantra GT B6103
50,125 km • Auto • Bluetooth • USB • A/C
$15,931

2013 Acura ILX SF0329A
40,977 km • Bluetooth • USB • Cruise
$20,687

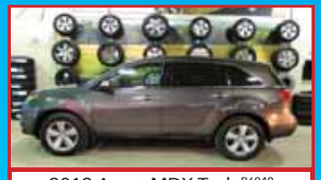
2007 Audi Q7 4.2 Quatro B6095
131,725 km • Leather • Htd. Steering Wheel
$22,399

2009 Nissan Pathfinder SE B6035
79,086 km • Htd. Seats • Keyless Entry • Cruise
$23,399

2009 Acura MDX Tech B6092
103,178 km • Leather • Nav • Bluetooth • Sunroof
$27,494

2011 Volvo C70 T5 B6057
66,191 km • Leather • Power Seats • Alloys
$29,494

2012 Subaru Tribeca Limited B6117
84,324 km • Bluetooth • Sunroof • Backup Cam
$31,494



2013 Acura MDX Tech B6040
85,191 km • Nav • Bluetooth • Leather • Alloys
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VOICES

DON'T WORRY, COUPLES HAVE LAME VALENTINE'S DAYS, TOO

THE KOHLER REPORT
By Rebecca Kohler

Are you going to be alone for Valentine's Day? Stop crying! You have options. One avenue is to book yourself a ticket to Portland, Ore., like, right now, and get yourself to Cuddle Con: The Cuddle Convention! The other is to count your blessings for being single and avoiding what will probably be a disappointment for 75 per cent of the coupled population. Those couples will receive stale chocolates or sit through awkward conversationless dinners for two —if they actually do anything at all.

First let's talk about this cuddling convention. Held at the Bossanova Ballroom in Portland, and costing $25 a ticket, Cuddle Con is a 12-hour event featuring a vast array of cuddle-related activities: Consent 101, "a crash course on Cuddle Con's culture of consent," Poetry For Passion Competition, dance classes, AcroYoga lessons and, finally, a 2.5-hour group snuggle that will be followed by a Valentine's Day Dance. Maybe you can dance with your co-cuddler? Sound fun?

Okay, you're still crying. Maybe the idea of paying someone to cuddle you is depressing. Or maybe cuddling with a stranger comes with an ick factor (it does for me: I'm a germophobe and it's measles season)! But the good news is that Cuddle Con's very existence is proof you are not alone in being alone. In fact, cuddling companies have been popping up all over the place — there's one in Vancouver, Montreal and rumour has it, others are on their way to Toronto and Edmonton.

People don't open businesses to sell things that other people don't need. Is there a store, for instance, that sells a kick in the teeth? No. People need hugs, so you are not alone.

It's not surprising that Cuddle-Con is on V-Day, as that's a day when a lot of people become uncomfortably aware that they have no one to hug. But if you're feeling "uncomfortably aware" of anything, again, I promise you, you're not alone.

Valentine's Day puts a spotlight on everyone's love life. Sure, it makes a single person wonder things like, "Why am I alone? Is something wrong with me? Who will fix my sink?" etc. But the spotlight doesn't discriminate. Try being in a mediocre relationship on the 14th. It's like this giant pale, sickly heart comes into your house to remind you it's dying.

It wasn't until my early 20s that I finally had a boyfriend on the big day. I was so excited. I pictured one of those heart-shaped boxes of chocolate and a card that said things like "I love you." Instead, my boyfriend showed up an hour late with a wilted rose and proceeded to complain for the rest of the night about how expensive it was,

Don't be jealous

My boyfriend showed up an hour late with a wilted rose and proceeded to complain for the rest of the night about how expensive it was.

"Ten bucks for a rose? WTF?"

I don't think I've ever received a Valentine's Day present that really hit the love spot. I once received an egg poacher (?). I had mixed feelings upon being gifted a cigarette case; I mean, yeah, I smoked at the time, so I guess it was thoughtful but it kind of felt like, "Here's a cigarette case. I love you, but I also hope you die one day."

I think the day died for me in 2010. I was leaving for an overnight trip on the morning of February 14th and my boyfriend gave me a card and said, "Don't open it until you're on the train." I took this to mean it was meaty, or at least that I'd enjoy it.

So I waited diligently and as the train pulled out of the station, I opened the card and all it said was, "I hope you have a nice day." Wow. No "love." No "so glad I met you." Not even an "xo." I proceeded to have the worst day.

To my surprise that man was not super-committed to like, our relationship, and I spent Valentine's Day fixing and re-fixing my tear-smudged makeup.

I have a pretty nice boyfriend now. We both think V-Day is kind of dumb, and Valentine's Day is easier now that we keep expectations low. We'll probably just exchange cards and luckily, this one knows how to write more than one sentence. Will we cuddle? Maybe a little. But we might also get into a fight about who left the space heater on overnight and spend the rest of the day being passive aggressive with each other because that's what relationships are all about. That and love.

If you're single and you go to Cuddle Con, you might get more hugs than me on the 14th. If you don't, you might stay in, under a blanket, eating delicious snacks, binge-watching ~~your favourite show on Netflix. That would~~ be a way nicer day than my Valentine's 2009. Trust me.

Rebecca Kohler is a stand-up comic, writer, actor, gymnast, lawyer and chemist. (Some of this isn't true.) Follow her on Twitter at @becca_kohler

Happy face/Sad face

From Jon Stewart's departure to Kanye West's outburst, Metro weighs in on the news that made headlines this week:

SAY IT AIN'T SO

Fans of late-night news satire, still mourning the recent end of The Colbert Report, are reeling this week from the announcement that Jon Stewart will be leaving The Daily Show. The comedy legend has been hosting the show — and putting Fox News pundits in their place — for 16 years.

MAYBE YOU SHOULDN'T PLAY POKER WITH YOUR DOG

File under pet owners already know this: A new study says that dogs are able to tell the difference between happy and angry human facial expressions. Various breeds were trained to touch either a happy face or a sad face for a treat.

A GHASTLY MISTAKE

A Romanian diplomat's secret spreadsheet describing guests at an upcoming dinner party as "undesirable" and "ghastly," was accidentally mailed out with the invitations. Recognizing that no amount of diplomacy was going to fix this one, the Foreign Ministry fired him.

HEARTBEATS

Just in time for Valentines Day, researchers at Simon Fraser University say they've created beating heart cells made from skin and blood tissue. The researchers hope the discovery could eventually be used to replace dead or damaged heart tissue in heart attack patients.

OH YEEZUS...

Hey, Kanye, I'm-a say something. Yes, the Grammys, much like other social institutions, have institutionalized racism. Yes, when white hip-hop artists who are literally pale imitations of their more talented black counterparts are heralded as the best the genre has to offer, racism probably has something to do with it. But your fight is not with Beck, who, much like yourself and Beyoncé, is very skilled. Much respect to all the musical artists out there doing their thing.

metro

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The danger of super-sexy roles

Analysis. Landing the lead in 50 Shades of Grey could make or break the career of Dakota Johnson — just ask Elizabeth Berkley

Dakota Johnson and Jamie Dornan star in 50 Shades of Grey. CONTRIBUTED

Jennifer Lawrence once showed me a cellphone snap of herself dressed in a fierce black leather outfit.

She was hot off the success of her Oscar-nominated work in Winter's Bone and used the photo as part of her audition for a role that every actress of a certain age in Hollywood clamoured for in 2010.

She didn't get the part of Lisbeth Salander, the pierced and inked computer hacker star of David Fincher's remake of The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo — the producers thought she was too tall. In the end, Rooney Mara got it, but not before auditioning five times and beating out better-known hopefuls like Natalie Portman, Scarlett Johansson and Anne Hathaway.

Girl with the Dragon Tattoo was 2011's big literary adaptation, ripe with star-making possibilities and lucrative franchise potential. It didn't pan out that way, but Hollywood hasn't given up on bringing bestsellers to the screen.

This week there are high hopes for Fifty Shades of Grey. Calling the story of college graduate Anastasia Steele and BDSM enthusiast Christian Grey a "literary" adaptation might be a stretch, but with 100 million books sold (including parts two and three) there are great expectations.

So, actors should be

In Focus

RICHARD CROUSE

crawling over one another to star in the film, right? Think again. Unlike Dragon Tattoo, young Hollywood ingenues have not been whipping themselves into a frenzy over Fifty Shades.

Shailene Woodley had no qualms about performing the film's explicit bondage scenes, but was already tied up making the Divergent movies.

Emma Watson did have qualms. "Who here actually thinks I would do Fifty Shades of Grey as a movie?" she wrote on Twitter.

In the end, Dakota Johnson, better known as the daughter of Don Johnson and Melanie Griffith than for her work on the cancelled sitcom Ben and Kate, won the role. While it might make her a star, there are dangers involved with a project like this. Just ask Elizabeth Berkley.

Berkley was a wholesome teen model and star of the sitcom Saved by the Bell when a role in Paul Verhoeven's 1995 sexploitation flick Showgirls left her career in tatters.

As the untested star who bared her soul and body in a big-budget film, she took the hit for the film's failure.

Almost 20 years later, she was still emotional about the backlash she suffered. After performing an erotic dance on Dancing with the Stars, she tearfully said, "it reconnected me to when I was just a young woman and took a risk creatively and did Showgirls. With that came a lot of doors being slammed in my face."

Will Johnson be the next Berkley?

According to the ticket-selling site Fandango Fifty, Shades of Grey is the fastest selling R-rated title ever, so Dakota may yet be spared a tearful breakdown in Dancing with the Stars in 2035.

Richard's ratings

50 Shades of Grey

Kingsman: The Secret Service

The Last Five Years

What We Do In The Shadows

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Ryan Reynolds says he attempted to create a three-dimensional character on the set of The Voices, rather than simply portraying a menacing, scary psychopath. HANDOUT

‘He’s the nicest serial killer you’ll ever meet’

Film. Dark comedy sees Ryan Reynolds walk fine line between eerie and endearing

MATT PRIGGE
Metro in New York City

If you’re asking, Ryan Reynolds is a dog person.

“But I’m only a dog person because they can be controlled,” he tells us.

“Cats hate me.”

That’s a light way to start talking about his new film, The Voices, in which he plays Jerry, a disturbed Midwesterner who’s off his meds, and as such, converses with his dog and his cat (both voiced by him). Soon enough, and purely by accident, he’s racked up a body count. Combining dark comedy with horror and a serious side is a challenge both for him and his director, Marjane Satrapi, who herself is changing gears from the Iran-set Persepolis and Chicken with Plums to stake a bloody American debut.

You had to chase this one down and talk with Satrapi about casting you. How did you convince her?

I knew there were two other actors who had their hands up for it, who I would argue are much more critically acclaimed than I am. So I really had to get my s— together. I met with Marjane and gave her my take on the guy. One of the things I said was: If there’s even one look of menace on Jerry’s face, we lose the audience. She seemed to really latch onto that idea, that we have to trust him, we have to follow him and ostensibly care for him. Somehow she, I don’t know, found me creepy enough to do the role.

What do you think she brings to this project that other directors might not have?

She brings a European sensibility, even though she does not originate from Europe. And she brings a sense of unending whimsy to a subject matter that is a little intense. As I’ve gotten older — I wish I’d learned this earlier — but films are all about the director. It’s their medium.

There’s something shockingly sweet-natured about the film. For one thing, the actual gore tends to be off-screen or obscured in the shots.

That’s funny — some people find it gory. I think it’s offset by Jerry’s innocence and arrested development. He was traumatized at 10 or 11 years old, and he’s still 10 or 11 years old when we meet him. It’s also offset by the fact that there’s this asexuality to him. That’s important, especially since we’re dealing with women in this movie. If there was a sexual component, the movie would be wholly unpleasant in every way shape or form, and it would never see the light of day. He’s the nicest serial killer you’ll ever meet.

Jerry’s definitely not a sexual predator.

Marjane did certain things, like when Anna Kendrick’s character (a co-worker with a crush on him) kisses Jerry. Anna’s tiny and I’m not, and she had us do it near a staircase, so she could have Anna up high, so she’d be in control. She pulls Jerry in for a kiss instead of Jerry coming to her.

Just do it

“One of the things Marjane and I clicked over was neither of us likes to rehearse. That was nice. Because I always think, just go be it. If I’m a good enough actor I can show up to set ready. We clicked on this ‘f— rehearsal’ thing. We just dove right in. I remember on Buried I was asked to rehearse for two weeks. I just said, “On what? Lying down on a coffee table in a room? Can we just shoot the f—ing thing? I don’t want to pretend I’m in a coffin, doing some Marcel Marceau bit. Let’s just go!”

Now in theatres

Ratings and synopses courtesy of Rotten Tomatoes. For more movie reviews, trailers and news go to RottenTomatoes.com.

Ratings: *Certified Fresh:* *Fresh:* *Rotten:* *Audience response:* *Audience anticipation for the film:* +

Mystery & Suspense

Kingsman: The Secret Service

Director. Matthew Vaughn

Stars. Colin Firth, Michael Caine

Based upon the acclaimed comic book and directed by Matthew Vaughn (Kick Ass, X-Men First Class), Kingsman: The Secret Service tells the story of a super-secret spy organization that recruits an unrefined but promising street kid into the agency's ultra-competitive training program just as a global threat emerges from a twisted tech genius.

Rotten Tomatoes™ score
Critics: 77% **Audience:** 88%

Romance

Fifty Shades of Grey

Director. Sam Taylor-Johnson

Stars. Jamie Dornan, Dakota Johnson

E.L. James' kinky bestseller gets the big-screen treatment with this Universal Pictures/Focus Features co-production. The steamy tale details a masochistic relationship between a college student and a businessman, whose desires for extreme intimacy stem from secrets in his past.

Rotten Tomatoes™ score
Critics: 42% **Audience:** + 87%

Drama/Comedy

Advanced Style

Director. Lina Plioplyte

Stars. Ari Seth Cohen

Street-style photographer Ari Seth Cohen and director Lina Plioplyte dive into the personal lives of New York City's most fashionable women over 60. In an industry obsessed with youth, these older women dispel conventional ideas about beauty and aging and prove that with age come grace, confidence, boldness, flair and new, unimagined opportunities.

Rotten Tomatoes™ score
Critics: 90% **Audience:** 73%

Drama

Leviathan

Director. Andrey Zvyagintsev

Stars. Elena Liadova, Alexei Serebriakov

The latest drama from Andrey Zvyagintsev, the acclaimed director of The Return. Kolya (Alexeï Serebriakov) lives in a small fishing town near the stunning Barents Sea in Northern Russia. He owns an auto-repair shop that stands right next to the house where he lives with his young wife Lilya (Elena Liadova) and his son Roma (Sergueï Pokhodaev).

Rotten Tomatoes™ score
Critics: 99% **Audience:** 83%

Comedy

Jupiter Ascending

Director. Andy Wachowski, Lana Wachowski

Stars. Mila Kunis, Channing Tatum

From the streets of Chicago to the far-flung galaxies whirling through space, Jupiter Ascending tells the story of Jupiter Jones (Mila Kunis), who was born under a night sky, with signs predicting she was destined for great things.

Rotten Tomatoes™ score
Critics: 23% **Audience:** 49%

Drama

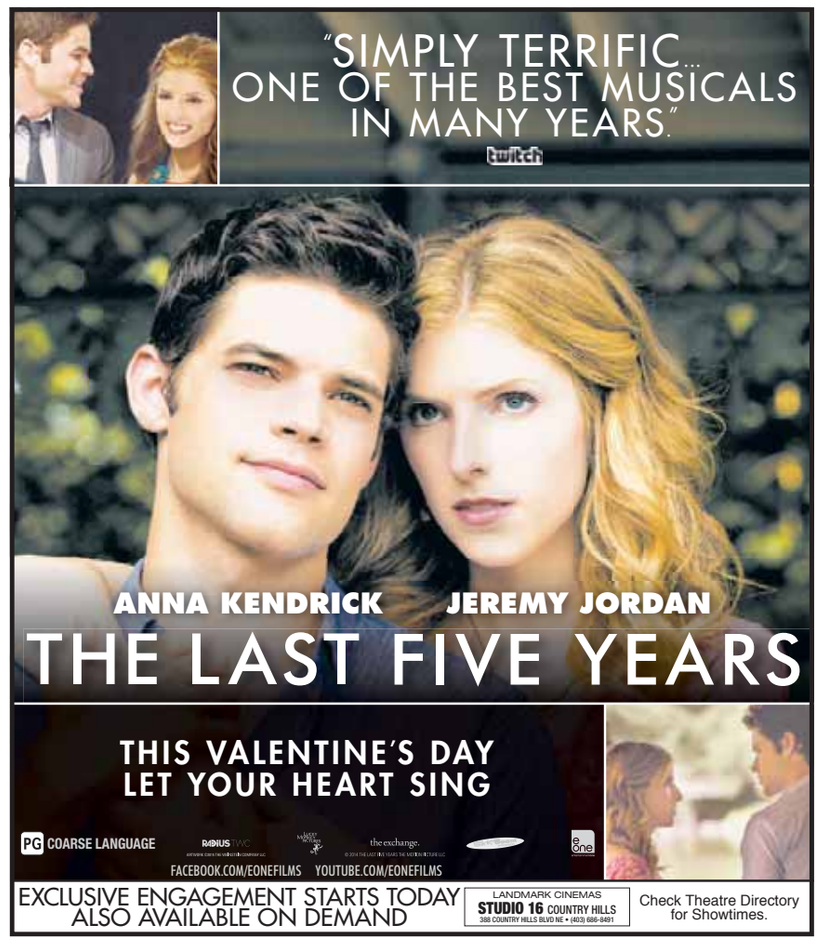
Seventh Son

Director. Sergey Bodrov

Stars. Jeff Bridges, Julianne Moore

In a time long past, an evil is about to be unleashed that will reignite the war between the forces of the supernatural and humankind once more. Master Gregory is a knight who had imprisoned the malevolently powerful witch, Mother Malkin, centuries ago. But now she has escaped and is seeking vengeance.

Rotten Tomatoes™ score
Critics: 10% **Audience:** 45%



Ed Burns rolls with indie-scene punches

Interview. Independent film has changed top-to-bottom since filmmaker-actor broke into it

MATT PRIGGE
Metro in New York City

Edward Burns has released a new book called Independent Ed. GETTY

Twenty years ago, Edward Burns was an overnight success story.

He was a nobody, able to get his tiny film, The Brothers McMullen, into Sundance, where it won the Grand Jury Prize and became an indie box-office juggernaut.

But despite some flashy acting gigs (including Saving Private Ryan), Burns has stayed small, eking out a career in a low-budget industry that, since he started, has changed top-to-bottom.

He chronicles his life in this evolving world in his new book, Independent Ed, which doubles as a handbook for aspiring filmmakers who need to stay afloat in an ever-mutating business.

Burns, whose show Public Morals will premiere on TNT in June, talked to Metro about what he's learned.

Do you miss film?

You know, I used to, when I first made the switch over to digital. Like a lot of other indie filmmakers, I did it more out of necessity, in that you could make films more inexpensively than you could with film. You missed not only the look, but the process of shooting with film, and getting your dailies and then later on seeing that film projected. But I have to admit, now that digital technology has improved so dramatically and the workflow has made certain things about production a lot easier, made it a lot more cost-efficient and sped up the editing process a little bit, I've fully embraced digital and no longer miss film.

The ease of digital

The technology has eliminated that barrier to entry for anyone who wants to make a film. You don't even need a professional cinematographer anymore. That was a big challenge on The Brothers McMullen: How do we find someone who knew how to shoot film? Today you can pick up a Canon 5D and just figure it out as you go.

How digital filmmaking inspires sincerity

Any kid who says, "I'm just going to grab a camera and start making a movie" is probably only going to be doing it for one reason: They love it. They have a story to tell and they want to do this thing. There will be a handful who do it because they want to become rich and famous, but I'm thinking the vast majority do it because they love movies and they think they have a story to tell. I wouldn't discourage that.

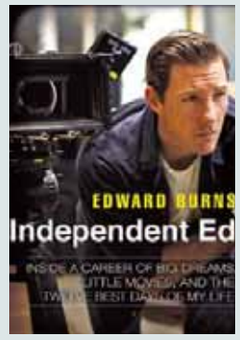
Getting attention

The great challenge now, given there are so many titles out there, is how do you monetize these films? An indie band, after their album is made, they're going to spend a year and a half on the road, playing in bars, trying to move their CD. That same tenacity is required of the indie filmmaker. Your work tour has to be hitting every film festival that will have you, and you'll be using social media and finding other digital distribution outlets as a way to build that audience. Very few guys have the overnight success that, let's say, I had with The Brothers McMullen. But that doesn't mean you can't find some success if you're willing to put in the long haul. There are countless examples of people doing just that, who found their rich audience online and made three or four or five feature films — films you've never heard of, but they have their fans. And they're somehow figuring out how to make yet another movie.

The future

The other thing that's going to be fascinating is all these things that didn't exist five, six, seven years ago — Twitter, Instagram. What is going to help the young filmmaker get his film out to the public in the next five years? There's going to be a new platform. If we could imagine it, we'd be very wealthy guys. When I released Purple Violets on iTunes, no one was doing that at the time. No one thought iTunes was a viable place to show films. And then later there was VOD. And now you're seeing Netflix is making films, and Amazon Prime. A young filmmaker has to keep an eye on where this is going and take some chances, try to be at the forefront of it.

Book



In Independent Ed, Burns says it's not enough to say you have a new film: You need another story to go along with that. He cites making 2007's Purple Violets, the first film to ever debut on iTunes, as an example. "That has to come organically to you," he says. "You've got to sit down with your film and look at your circumstances of however you got it made, and whatever your hook is you have to recognize that that has to be part of the sales pitch. It has to be part of the narrative of your film. But there's no strategy for you to take. It's just a matter of looking at your story and finding an angle to generate a little more press or a little more interest in the film."

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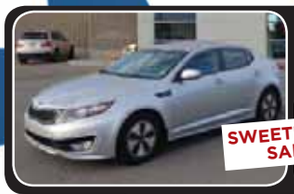

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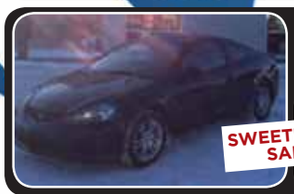

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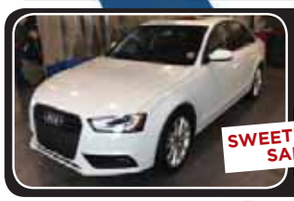

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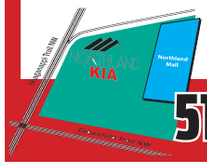

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Falling in love with The Last Five Years

Dream roles. As an aspiring musical theatre actor, Jeremy Jordan thought this cult work by Jason Robert Brown was the cat's pyjamas; now, he's starring in the film

Like everyone starting out in musical theatre, Jeremy Jordan had a song from The Last Five Years ready to go in his back pocket.

Jordan, the Tony Award-nominated star of Newsies: The Musical and TV's Smash, had fallen in love with the Jason Robert Brown musical when it premiered in 2002 and added one of its tunes to his audition list.

"It was like the bar. It was the apex. It was like the thing you strived for," he recalled. "If you could do justice to a song from The Last Five Years, then you were in good shape as a musical theatre actor."

Now Jordan has upped his game. He's gone from having one of its songs down pat to starring in the first-ever movie adaptation of Brown's cultishly adored song cycle about a young couple's falling in and out of love.

"It was fun because I knew it so well and I felt like I really connected to it when I first heard it and I still connected to it," Jordan said. "I got to share that love and connection with everybody else."

Jordan co-stars alongside Anna Kendrick in the 95-minute film, which has been adapted and directed by Richard LaGravenese and hits theatres and video on demand Friday after making its premiere at the Toronto International Film Festival.

Jeremy Jordan GETTY IMAGES

It's the five-year love affair — told almost entirely in song — of aspiring actress Cathy and budding novelist Jamie, one on the rise and the other finding the going frustrating in mid-1990s New York.

Brown structured the story with a twist: Jamie starts at the beginning of the relationship and alternates songs with Cathy as he moves to the crushing end, while Cathy begins at the end and moves in reverse chronological order to the couple's sunny origin.

While Brown had been approached about turning the musical into a film for years, no proposal really excited him until he spoke with LaGravenese, the writer and director of Beautiful Creatures and P.S. I Love You.

"I always thought it might make a nice movie, but I never really had a sense of what that movie was supposed to look like or anything like that," said Brown, who has a cameo as an audition pianist. "I'm very proud of it."

Quote

"It was like the bar. It was the apex. It was like the thing you strived for. If you could do justice to a song from The Last Five Years, then you were in good shape as a musical theatre actor."

Jeremy Jordan

LaGravenese added some quirky, surreal touches and dance numbers to the heartbreaking naturalism of Brown's songs, and he made it modern with the use of Skype and cellphones. LaGravenese also pulled the theatrical piece into the world of film by having the young lovers in the same scene, even if only one was singing.

It was filmed over 2 1/2 weeks in New York during the sweltering summer of 2013 and maintained its intimacy by having 90 per cent of it sung live. Prerecording the songs and then lip-synching them for cameras weeks later wasn't an option.

"You write songs about moments that are special, that are particular, that are meaningful and that are impactful. Every moment in the film is one of those moments," said Jordan, who, during the song Moving Too Fast, actually bikes through the city while singing. (The soundtrack is available for download.)

Things got a little more real than the crew bargained for during a lunch break on the last week of filming when a thief opened the unlocked costume truck and made off with most of Jordan's clothes, including four pairs of expensive jeans cut specifically for Jordan.

"I was like, 'What are you going to do with a bunch of dude's clothes that are sized specifically to Jeremy Jordan's butt?'" he said, laughing. "I guess you have to find some very specific clients for that."

The finished film is something that Brown admits is still startling, even though the musical is done hundreds of times across the globe every year. His small, semi-autobiographical story is now on a huge screen, being sung by stars with enormous faces. "That part was an incredible head trip," Brown said, laughing. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Anna Kendrick and Jeremy Jordan co-star in The Last Five Years. CONTRIBUTED

Kendrick's singing chops didn't surprise insiders

Musical roles. Anna co-stars in The Last Five Years, but her vocal prowess isn't news to those who've seen Into the Woods or Pitch Perfect

STEVE GOW
scene@metronews.ca

Ever since Anna Kendrick crooned the catchy single Cups in 2012's sleeper hit Pitch Perfect, she's become Hollywood's hottest rising singing star — subsequently starring in such big-screen musicals as Into the Woods and the upcoming Pitch Perfect 2. The petite actor's unlikely vocal success may astonish some moviegoers, but it certainly didn't catch filmmaker Richard LaGravenese by surprise.

"We cast her before Pitch came out, so we were really lucky," admitted the director of the indie musical The Last Five Years.

Based on the off-Broadway stage play by Jason Robert Brown, LaGravenese laughs in hindsight that it was a "gamble" to cast Kendrick at the time.

"The deal with Jason was I would pick the actor because I needed actors who would be able to act and then he would tell me if they could sing," reflected LaGravenese with a laugh. "She was the first and only and (she) was perfect."

The film follows the passionate relationship between a struggling New York-based actress (Kendrick) and her quick-rising novelist boyfriend (Jeremy Jordan of TV's Smash) as they manoeuvre the ups, downs and possible demise of their romance.

"(Love stories) are difficult," admitted LaGravenese, who earned his reputation writing such lovesick stories as 2011's Water For Elephants and P.S. I Love You.

"The late (filmmaker) Sydney Pollack once said to me, 'Love stories are great up until they fall in love. Then after that, what do you do?' So my favourite love stories are the ones where people don't wind up together because, to me, relationships are really about finding out who you are."

Certainly, Kendrick has proven who she is — and it became immediately evident when she walked onto LaGravenese's set the first day.

"You tell her what's going on and she goes right with it, but if there's an idea she has, she'll come up with something and you'll go, 'Let's do that!'" said LaGravenese. "She's one of the funniest, wittiest, scary-smart actresses I've ever worked with."

Out of order

LaGravenese on the film's unusual non-linear narrative:

- "I kind of like the idea that you have to follow the movie emotionally so the chronology isn't as important — it's more like a mosaic. It's more like Scenes of a Marriage with music."

No more romance

LaGravenese has stated that The Last Five Years will be his last romance for a while:

- "I'm really hungry to do other (films)," said the director. "I certainly don't want to do a romantic comedy. I don't believe in them anymore, so this may be my farewell to love stories."

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Jackman getting back to his Aussie roots in new role

Interview. Actor says using his native accent while filming Chappie was 'great but weird'

It's not that often that Hugh Jackman gets a role speaking in his native Australian, so while working on the upcoming sci-fi thriller Chappie he had to get reacquainted with the dialect.

The 46-year-old Tony Award winner said in an interview earlier this week that using his own accent "was great but weird."

"I had to practice it because it was way stronger than my natural accent," Jackman said.

Jackman also admits brushing up on some of the Australian slang that writer-director Neill Blomkamp wrote for the part.

"He used a lot of phrases, and I had to end up Googling the slang," Jackman said. "Neill was coming up with some really cool sayings ... I was trying to think of more, so I ended up Googling some of them."

Chappie, which opens in theatres on March 6, tells the story of a fallen police robot that is reprogrammed to think and feel for itself. Jackman said he had fun playing the film's antagonist, an engineer strongly opposed to artificial intelligence.

"We got to create this character that did stretch it a bit. We had a lot of fun with him from the look, his mannerism, the way he talked. At the same time, it was very much based in a reality that was needed for the movie in terms of the voice of caution," Jackman said.

Blomkamp is known for his sci-fi thrillers District 9 and Elysium.

The last time Jackman appeared in a film using his native accent was The Australian in 2008, opposite Nicole Kidman.

He did lend his voice to the 2012 animated film Rise of the Guardians.

Jackman, who just finished a Broadway run in the Jez Butterworth play The River, says he will hit the stage again next month.

"My one-man show I did here on Broadway a few years back, I'm going to do in Turkey. I'm very excited about that," he said.

He added: "It should be fun. We'll see how the Turks like it."

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Quoted

"He used a lot of phrases and I had to end up Googling the slang. Neill was coming up with some really cool sayings. ... I was trying to think of more."

Hugh Jackman on director Neill Blomkamp's use of Aussie slang in Chappie

Chappie opens in theatres March 6. CONTRIBUTED

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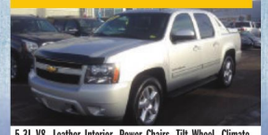

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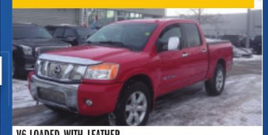

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Novelists who like to crack the whip on set

Book adaptations. Author E.L. James was reportedly determined to have her way with the film version of Fifty Shades, but she's not the only writer who's big on creative control

E.L. James wasn't willing to let others dominate the Fifty Shades of Grey film.

From the start of the development process, reports swirled over the author's request for an unusual amount of creative control over the big-screen version of her erotic bestseller.

And as the S&M-focused, Vancouver-shot film gets set for release on Friday, more details have surfaced about just how much input she had.

Director Sam Taylor-Johnson recently told Porter magazine that "It was difficult" with James being so attached to the movie, admitting that they had "creative fights."

She also told the Hollywood Reporter "there were times when it was really, really frustrating." But James isn't the only author who's been hands-on with a film adaptation of their work. Here are five examples of other writers who've also been involved in cinematic versions of their books. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Quoted

"There were times when it was really, really frustrating."

Director Sam Taylor-Johnson, on the 'creative fights' she had with E.L. James over the movie version of Fifty Shades of Grey

Fifty Shades of Grey author E.L. James GETTY IMAGES

J.K. Rowling, Harry Potter series

You could say Rowling had a magical contract with Warner Bros. for the film adaptation of her boy wizard series. She not only had a say in principal casting as well as the screenplays, she also had input on where the films were shot and got a producer credit. As Rowling told the Times U.K. in June 2000, she had "a huge amount of influence" in the development process.

J. K. Rowling

Cheryl Strayed, Wild

As Montreal director Jean-Marc Vallée told The Canadian Press, Strayed "became part of the team" while her memoir got the Hollywood treatment. She read various versions of the script and was an unofficial technical adviser as Vallée depicted her soul-seeking journey on the Pacific Crest Trail. Laura Dern, an Oscar nominee for playing Strayed's mother, said she bonded with the author on set and the two have since vacationed together with their families.

Reese Witherspoon and Cheryl Strayed

Suzanne Collins, Hunger Games trilogy; Gillian Flynn, Gone Girl

Collins co-wrote the screenplay for the first film in her dystopian adventure series and earned a producing credit for all three movies to be released so far. Meanwhile, Flynn was the lone screenwriter on the big-screen remake of her psychological thriller, which has earned star Rosamund Pike an Oscar nomination.

Suzanne Collins

Stephen Chbosky, The Perks of Being a Wallflower

Chbosky went a step further than Collins and Flynn, not only writing the screenplay for his film but also directing it. It's perhaps understandable why he'd want to have full control over the adaptation of the hit 1999 coming-of-age novel. After all, the story of a shy and troubled teen who bonds with an eclectic group of seniors in high school is autobiographical.

Stephen Chbosky

Stephenie Meyer, Twilight series

Meyer reportedly had a close relationship with director Catherine Hardwicke during the initial stages of bringing her vampire saga to the screen. Meyer also visited the set, got a producer credit and a cameo in the first film, and was consulted on the story. According to Entertainment Weekly, Meyer was guaranteed "that the film would be true to her vision."

Stephenie Meyer

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CALGARY-MACKAY-NOSE HILL PROGRESSIVE CONSERCATIVE ASSOCIATION NOTICE OF NOMINATION MEETING

The Calgary Mackay-Nose Hill PC Association is seeking nominations for individuals interested in becoming the candidate to represent the constituency and the Progressive Conservative Association of Alberta in the next provincial election. The nomination period to obtain information, complete the nomination papers, and pay the $500.00 nomination fee, will commence today, Friday February 13 and will close at 4:00pm on Saturday February 21, 2015. The nomination meeting (if necessary) will be held from 10:00-4:00 on Saturday March 7 at Huntington Hills Community Association (520-78 Ave. NW). Voters shall be members in good standing of the PCAA, must reside within the boundaries of the riding, be a Canadian citizen, and at least 14 years of age. When voting, members must show PCAA Membership card, and have two (2) pieces of identification, at least one of which must be a photo ID. The boundaries of Calgary Mackay-Nose Hill are Huntington Hills, Beddington Heights, Sandstone Heights, MacEwan Glen, Evanston, Sage Meadows, and in addition the area north-west of Stony Trail and east of Symons Valley Rd. NW extending north to the city limits, as well as the area bounded by McKnight Boulevard NE to the south as far east as 36 Street NE and as far north as the city limits, and as far west as the CP Rail right of way. Interested parties may obtain further information, sets of approved nomination papers and details of the nomination process from the Nomination Chair at nominationsmackaynosehill@hotmail.com or phone Chairman Larry or Ann at (587-223-1542).

Will you spend V-Day at Fifty Shades, or run the other way?

Opening night. Moms and other diehard fans hope to bond over the film with their significant others — but some men are tied up elsewhere

Brittany Brown wouldn't miss the opening of the Fifty Shades of Grey movie for anything. She has read and reread all three books, uses the app, follows FSOG role play on Twitter and set her DVR to record trailers for the highly anticipated Valentine's weekend release.

But ditching her boyfriend for her gal gang of superfans was problematic. "Feb. 14 is actually his birthday. He'll go out with his guy friends and I'll see FSOG with my friends. Later that evening we'll all meet up to party. We'll celebrate Valentine's Day on Sunday as a couple," said Brown, a 22-year-old public relations intern in Silver Spring, Md.

Three years in the waiting, the opening of the erotic romance on sweethearts' weekend will be a breathless affair for Fifty diehards everywhere.

Some will have husbands in tow. Some already have tickets. And those book groups of mommies that helped propel the bondage story to more than 100 million copies sold? They'll be crowding theatres, too.

Lyss Stern in New York will be one of them with 50 friends, including some very expectant ones. "Hopefully nobody will go into labour," she laughed.

Stern, 40, throws mom-centric social events for a living and once feted Fifty writer E.L. James at the height of mania over the books. Come Feb. 13, Stern will be handing out treats to her buddies when they take their seats in a Manhattan theatre. She'll include special sweets and other, er, stuff.

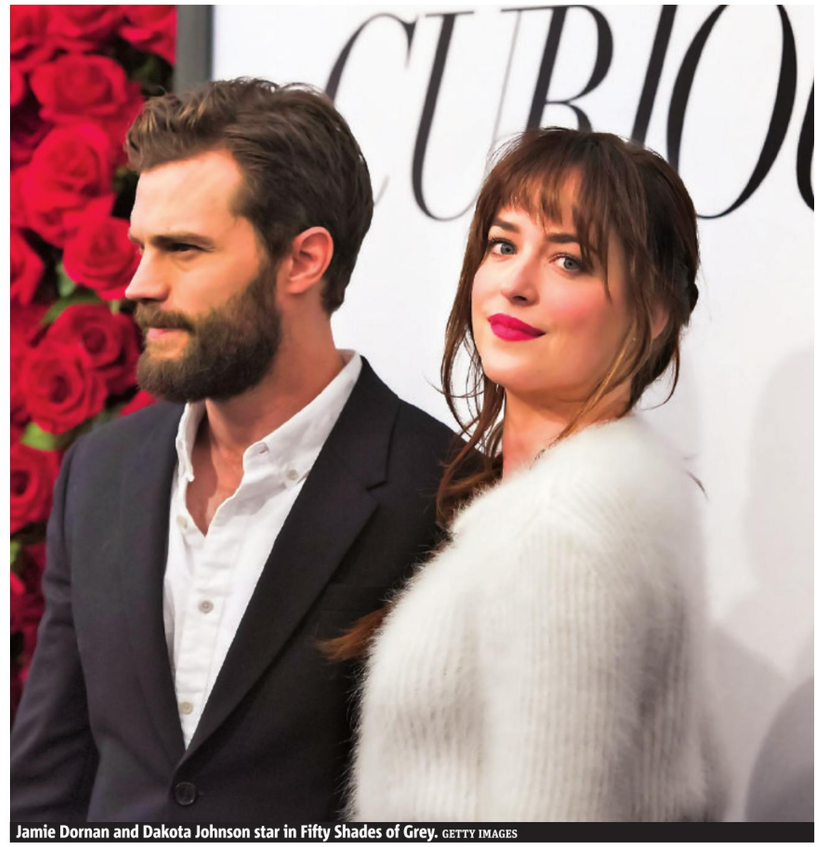
"There will be some fun toys, of course," she promised. "It's the most buzzed-about film in the mommy world in a long time. It's a Sex and the City kind of excitement. We know it's not going to win an Oscar, but we also know it's going to be fun."

In North Hampton, N.H., you can count Lou Altman wholeheartedly, completely voluntarily, in. "My wife and I have been planning this date since the movie was announced," said the 50-year-old head of a satellite communications company. "Any half-smart husband will go see this movie with his wife. There WILL be a payoff."

Oscar Mendizabal, 30, an Internet technology specialist in Los Angeles, is warming up to his Fifty movie date with his wife of nearly 12 years. They'll be joined by her brother and his girlfriend. He's given up on his plan to sneak into American Sniper. "At the end of the day," Mendizabal said, "I'm a sucker for love." THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Quoted

"It's the most buzzed-about film in the mommy world in a long time."
Fifty Shades fan Lyss Stern


Jamie Dornan and Dakota Johnson star in Fifty Shades of Grey. GETTY IMAGES

The novels that Hollywood couldn't ignore

Adaptations. With a Fifty Shades film now upon us, we look back at how iffy bestsellers fared on the big screen

This weekend sees the release of Fifty Shades of Grey, the latest publishing sensation to become a hotly anticipated film. Advance ticket sales have already broken records.

But it's not the first time that a bestseller with a questionable reputation has led to a no-brainer film. Here are other instances where a novel was just too big for the movies to ignore. MATT PRIGGE/METRO IN NEW YORK CITY

Valley of the Dolls

Author: Jacqueline Susann
Copies sold: 30 million
Publishing date: 1966
Made into a movie in: 1967

In 1966, Susann's trash-fest about pill-popping Hollywood ingenues became the year's bestseller. By 1967, it was one of the year's top-grossing movies. Neither was respected, though, and by 1970, the studio that owned it had assigned T&A man Russ Meyer and acclaimed young film critic Roger Ebert to lampoon it with Beyond the Valley of the Dolls.

Lolita

Author: Vladimir Nabokov
Copies sold: 50 million
Publishing date: 1955
Made into a movie in: 1961

Lolita isn't a trash novel; it's one of the most beautifully written achievements in literature. Nevertheless, let's assume the majority of those buying Nabokov's book about a "nymphette" loved by an obsessive scholar were drawn to its raciness, not its flowing prose. But Lolita's cultural importance couldn't be ignored, even by a Hollywood still hogtied by the censorious Production Code, which meant the very basis of the story could be made neither explicit nor even implied. Stanley Kubrick wound up with the thankless job of directing it, and he turned in a fascinatingly torn picture, one that amped up the comedy (thanks to Peter Sellers) but also, via lead James Mason, the tragic despair. In 1998, a more faithful — albeit still understandably bashful — film was made by Fatal Attraction's Adrian Lyne, but it had none of the wit and anguish of Kubrick's severely compromised film.

Gone with the Wind

Author: Margaret Mitchell
Copies sold: 30 million
Publishing date: 1936
Made into a movie in: 1939

Mitchell's Civil War saga was a mega-seller right off the bat. In fact, the film rights were sold only a month after it was published. By the time shooting was underway in early 1939, the novel — which was only part trash and even won the Pulitzer — was such a sensation that any film needed to have equal immensity. And it got it: not only does the finished film run nearly four hours, but it was made with the finest wares — as much a technical achievement as an artistic one. Indeed, every single Technicolor shot is a doozy, and every performance so deeply felt that ignoring its racial politics proves easier than it should be.

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Love Story

Author: Erich Segal
Copies sold: 21 million
Publishing date: 1970
Made into a movie in: 1970

Actually, this wasn't technically an adaptation: Segal had first written his tale of an Ivy Leaguer who falls for a diseased Radcliffe honey as a screenplay, then turned it into a novel while production was underway. It became a bestseller, which only helped the film: Readers could flip over the final page and promptly go see the earnest film made of it, which producer Robert Evans memorably described as having caused "more pregnancies ... than any other ever made in the history of film." Evans was a whiz with literary movies — having already tackled Rosemary's Baby by this point, he would next turn to Mario Puzo's The Godfather.

Twilight series

Author: Stephenie Meyer
Copies sold: 120 million
Publishing dates: 2005-2011
Made into movies: 2008-2012

The trend by which any moderately selling YA series can beget a movie franchise began here. It made a mint out of a piece of Mormon propaganda warning young readers about the dangers of teenage sex before going, in its final instalment, full-tilt boogie with super-sex, a birth scene that would make David Cronenberg vomit and a bit where a werewolf and a baby fall in love. Now that there's a movie series based on repurposed Twilight fanfic (namely, Fifty Shades), perhaps a wormhole will tear the universe to shreds.

Documenting the every day dilemmas of vampires

Comedy. Jemaine Clement and Stuart Rutherford talk What We Do in the Shadows

The cast of What We Do in the Shadows. HANDOUT

Most people would probably balk — or move out — if a roommate asked to store a coffin in their room.

But Stuart Rutherford, an IT consultant from New Zealand, kindly obliged when his roommate Taika Waititi asked if he could keep a dusty casket next to his bed.

"I was like, 'Sure, but is there a dead body in it?' He was like, 'No, no, it's just an empty coffin,'" Rutherford recalled. "There were a couple days there where I was like, 'Where is this going?"'

It turned out Waititi, a comedian, and his friend Jemaine Clement were shooting a short mockumentary about vampires. It was 2005, before Clement would skyrocket to cult fame in North America with the HBO hit Flight of the Conchords.

When an actor called in sick, Rutherford stepped in to play a small role. Now, in the feature-length What We Do in the Shadows, opening Friday in select Canadian cities, Rutherford's role as a rosy-cheeked IT guy named Stuart was expanded.

The improvised comedy documents the everyday problems of undead flatmates Vladislav (Clement), Viago (Waititi) and Deacon (Jonathan Brugh) in Wellington, N.Z. — like old bones left on the floor, rivalries with werewolves, and freak sunshine accidents.

During last fall's Toronto International Film Festival, where What We Do in the Shadows won the People's Choice award for best entry in the Midnight Madness program, Clement and Rutherford sat down to chat with The Canadian Press.

How did the idea for a vampire mockumentary come about?

Clement: I wanted to do a vampire film because I had always been obsessed with vampires when I was a kid. And Taika wanted to do a mockumentary. Basically, we just put them together and thought they'd be a good fit because mockumentaries don't tend to go into the paranormal or into things that you can't really film.

Quoted

"I wanted to do a vampire film because I had always been obsessed with vampires when I was a kid."

jemaine Clement
Creator of What We Do in the Shadows

You actually went to bars in Wellington while dressed as vampires in both the 2005 short and the feature film. What happened?

Clement: In the first film, I think we were close to getting beaten up. We got called so many names — guys constantly shouting at us when we dressed like that going into town. But now, you can't get people to do it. We wrote it into the script thinking it was going to happen again, but people never did it. There is a kid who does it in the film. But we asked him, and he was like, 'No way, man, I'm not going to say that.' Attitudes have really changed in a good way.

What was it like shooting an improvised movie in which only Clement and Waititi knew what was in the script?

Clement: Sometimes people in the crew would let it slip. There was a vampire hunter but we didn't want him to know he was playing a vampire hunter. But the costume designer put his belt of stakes around him and we were like, 'Oh, now he's going to know.' But we kept everything secret from the cast so we could get some real reactions sometimes.

Rutherford: It was kind of like being in a weird game show where you don't know when it's going to end, you don't know if you're passing each test and then strange stuff happens and you just have to react.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

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Spectre crew offers behind-the-scenes look at Bond

Film. Breathtaking background teaser released from set of 24th 007 film

The Sam Mendes and Daniel Craig picture Spectre is currently filming in Europe, and behind-the-scenes footage recently released online reveals aspects of what Associate Producer Gregg Wilson calls "one of the major action sequences of the movie." That particular segment, which takes place high in the Austrian mountains, is "a jewel in the crown" according to Wilson, who commended the region for offering "everything that we needed to pull it off."

Supporting cast members Léa Seydoux and Dave Bautista offer their thoughts on production so far, with production manager Martin Joy weighing in on the challenges of shooting in such remote circumstances.

"There's all the difficulties of going somewhere that's so cut off, coupled with the weather difficulties, the altitude," he says, "but the payoff is stunning scenery and an incredible location."

And for those who want more of a glimpse of how Spectre might eventually turn out, there's a three-second shot of Daniel Craig as Bond involved in the climax of a life-or-death struggle.

That accompanies the first still image of Daniel Craig as Bond of Spectre; a Nov. 6 release beckons for North American and international audience. AFP

Daniel Craig stars once again as action hero James Bond. HANDOUT

Film. When in Rome, Stiller will strike a pose in Zoolander reboot

Actor and director Ben Stiller has finalized agreements to start production on a European-flavoured Zoolander 2.

Shooting will take place in Rome, and the film will feature a multinational cast.

Stiller had previously indicated that Rome was high on his wishlist for a second Zoolander film, and Feb. 10 saw Rome's mayor Ignazio Marino confirm via Facebook that plans were close to fruition.

"Ben Stiller will shoot his next film in our city this spring, with a cast of Americans and Italians," he wrote.

"Rome is returning to its status as one of great cinema's international destinations."

The first film helped cement the reputation of several comic actors who rose to fame as part of a loose affiliation dubbed the Frat Pack.

As catwalk clothing model Derek Zoolander (whose name was a send-up of '90s male supermodel Mark Vanderloo), Stiller had to overcome a rivalry with hunky young dreamer Hansel (Owen Wilson), woo an investigative journalist (Christine Taylor) and defeat a global terror conspiracy orchestrated by a scheming fashion guru, Mugatu (Will Ferrell).

Zoolander HANDOUT

Stiller, Owen Wilson, Taylor and Ferrell are all tipped to return for Zoolander 2, which takes place a decade on from the events of its predecessor.

Penelope Cruz has been named as a high-profile newcomer, while Jonah Hill and model-turned-actress Cara Delevingne have also been linked with roles. AFP

Guys, your pickup tricks make Vince Vaughn sick

Vince Vaughn might have become famous playing conniving womanizers in films like Swingers and Wedding Crashers, but he is absolutely appalled by the behaviour of his characters' real-life counterparts these days. Appalled.

"Gaming on women has become almost like the dark arts," he tells Playboy. "Like, if you're not cutting her down or using psychological tricks to make fun of her, you won't get anywhere."

But don't worry, he has some advice for those steered wrong by the likes of Mystery. "I would suggest that if you take the avenue of putting a woman down or making fun of her so she feels insecure enough to go out with you, you're ultimately screwing yourself," he says. "I mean, let's face it, if you require coaching and techniques to get a woman, it'll come out as dishonest and you'll probably end up unhappy or alone." So, you know, don't be a creep. **NED EHRBAR/METRO IN HOLLYWOOD**

Blake Lively GETTY IMAGES

About that Blake Lively baby name...

So, early reports that Blake Lively and Ryan Reynolds named their newborn daughter Violet have been thoroughly discredited, with Reynolds himself telling USA Today,

"No, that's not the name. I don't want to get into that, but I don't know where that came from." Got it. So then what is the little girl's name? And why are you being so weirdly secretive about it? It's just a name. And according to an anonymous source that's tipped off E! News, that name is actually James. Yes, a baby girl named James. Sure, why not? **NED EHRBAR**

Could Bruce be at fault for fatal crash after all?

Bruce Jenner GETTY IMAGES

Police have not issued a statement on which driver is ultimately at fault for the four-car pileup last weekend involving Bruce Jenner that left one woman dead, but the lawyer for one of the drivers involved feels pretty strongly it was all Jenner's fault. Roger Simon, legal counsel for the driver of a Prius also involved in the crash, says the reluctant reality star is most definitely at fault — which, to be fair, isn't that much of a surprise. Honestly, what's he going to do? Call up the press and insist his own client is guilty? Simon disputes the official account of the incident, alleging in the L.A. Times that Jenner actually struck the white Lexus driven by the victim, Kim Howe, before continuing on to hit his client's car as well. **NED EHRBAR**

Gossip

NED EHRBAR

METRO'S TAKE ON THE WORLD OF CELEBRITIES

Uma's got something to say about her chameleon complexion

We might be more used to Thurman's look below, but the actress says she's been a fan of the makeup-free face for years. ALL PHOTOS GETTY IMAGES

So yeah, those photos of Uma Thurman on the red carpet earlier this week that got so much attention? She heard what you've been saying about them. Thurman stopped by the Today show for a chat and inevitably the online uproar around her new look came up. "I look weird," Thurman admits. "I guess nobody liked my makeup. I mean, I've been doing this for years and years and years, and people say things nice and they say things mean, and it's just like, whatever!"

And for anyone suggesting the new look might have something more to it than just a distinct lack of eye makeup, check out her Today show look, where it's back to the Thurman we all know and love. And she admits she'll likely not be rocking that shocking red carpet look again. "We saw how well the dark lipstick worked the other night," she joked.

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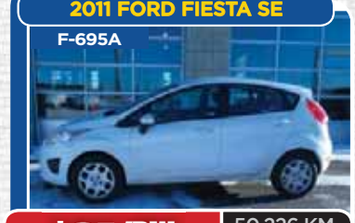

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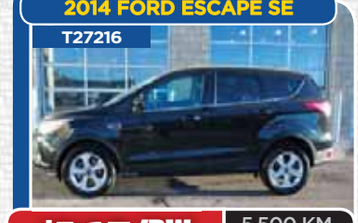

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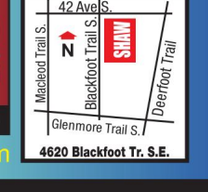

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Ricardo is a Canadian chef, television host and author on a mission: To unite people through the pleasure of food. Discover his delicious and simple recipes every Friday — just in time for the weekend

Get on your lover's sweet side

This recipe serves two. COURTESY RICARDOCUISINE.COM

Valentine's Day. Chocolate Raspberry Crémeux For Two are a lot more impressive than store-bought treats

RICARDO COOKS
Chef Ricardo
Ricardo Magazine

Although we hardly need an excuse to enjoy a decadent dessert, it seems fitting to whip up something extra-special for Valentine's Day.

Dark Chocolate Crémeux

1. In a bowl, combine the egg yolks and sugar with a whisk. Set aside.

2. In a saucepan, bring the 35% cream to a boil. Remove from the heat and add the finely chopped dark chocolate. Allow to melt for 1 minute and stir until smooth. Gradually pour into the egg mixture, stirring constantly.

3. Add the unsalted butter and stir until smooth. Cover the mixture and refrigerate for at least 4 hours.

White Chocolate Cream

1. In a bowl, place the white chocolate. Set aside.

2. In a small saucepan or microwave oven, bring the 34% cream to a boil.

3. Pour the hot cream over the white chocolate. Allow this to melt for 1 minute and stir the mixture with a whisk until smooth. Cover the mixture and refrigerate for at least 2 hours.

Macerated Raspberries

1. In bowl, combine the raspberries, sugar and raspberry liqueur. Allow to macerate for about 5 minutes.

Assembly

1. Whip white chocolate cream with an electric mixer until medium-soft peaks appear.

2. On a large plate for two, spread the white chocolate cream. Using two tablespoons dipped in warm water, form five to six mounds, each with about 3 tbsp of dark chocolate crémeux mixture. Place on the cream. Garnish with raspberries and serve with 2 spoons.

FOLLOW RICARDO ON SOCIAL MEDIA AND ON RICARDOCUISINE.COM OR SUBSCRIBE TO HIS MAGAZINE'S ENGLISH EDITION, WHICH LAUNCHED IN 2014.

Ingredients

Dark Chocolate Crémeux
- 3 egg yolks
- 1/4 cup (53 g) sugar
- 1/2 cup (125 ml) 35% cream
- 4 oz (115 g) dark chocolate, finely chopped
- 2 tbsp (28 g) unsalted butter, softened

White Chocolate Cream
- 1 oz (30 g) white chocolate, chopped
- 1/3 cup (75 ml) 35% cream

Macerated Raspberries
- 1/3 cup (42 g) raspberries
- 2 tsp sugar
- 2 tsp (10 ml) raspberry liqueur

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Bring bubbles to Feb. 14

LIQUID ASSETS
Peter Rockwell
@therealwineguy
liquidassets@eastlink.ca

Roses are red, violets are blue, I'm having sparkling wine this Valentine's Day, how about you?

While I'm no poet, all you guys out there better take advantage of this Feb. 14 falling on a Saturday by bringing breakfast in bed to your significant other paired with a glass of something fresh and fizzy.

If expensive French champagne isn't in your snack bracket, pick up a bubbly made in the traditional method. The process developed in the Champagne region infuses wines with effervescence through a second fermentation in the bottle.

Most traditional method wines taste as close to champagne as you'll ever get for less than $20, with those from Spain identified as Cava leading the pack.

If you prefer your bubbles to be less obvious, look to Italian Prosecco.

Not as moussy as a typical sparkler, wines like La Marca Prosecco ($17.95 - $19.99) have taken the world by storm over the last few years thanks to their zippy acidity, creamy flavour trail and cocktail-esque personality. **PRICES REFLECT THE RANGE ACROSS THE COUNTRY. SOME PRODUCTS MAY NOT BE AVAILABLE IN ALL PROVINCES.**

LIFE WITHOUT JESUS IS HOPELESS

Jesus said to the fig tree," may no one ever eat your fruits again". *Mark11:14 NLT* The aftermath of this encounter was the death of the fig tree. Life devoid of Jesus is more or less like the situation of the fig tree. Jesus is calling on you today. Accept him into your life so that you can manifest those fruits expected of you.

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Valentines for your place or mine

Instead of splashing out on cheesy gifts for Valentine's Day, why not make an investment that will look good in your home? Here are some of our favourites

AFP

You light up my life

This funky light is playful and cute, and, at either 30cm or 60cm, is a non-intrusive way of adding a bit of love to your interior spaces. It can be laid on its side on flat surfaces, or mounted on the wall. From $170.

TWO GIRLS AND A CONTAINER

Have a little heart

This miniature collectible is a replica of the piece originally designed by Verner Panton in 1958. $406 in the MoMA store. **VERNER PANTON**

Can you handle it?

Italian homeware brand Alessi gets romantic with this TO mug, made from bone china. The mug comes with a ribbon designed for writing personalized dedications. From $37. **MIRIAM MIRRI FOR ALESSI**

Just one's cup of tea

Classic yet irreverent, this Queen of Hearts teacup and saucer from English china brand Wedgwood will set the mood for teatime. The cup is part of a wider collection featuring a teapot, cream and sugar bowl. $77.

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Breaking bad habits

Germ warfare. Subtle daily tasks can make you more vulnerable to cold and flu viruses

HELEN RACANELLI
For Metro

That elevator button at your place of work or your apartment building harbours harmful bacteria. SHUTTERSTOCK

Good hand-washing is vital to avoiding colds and flu, but you might be surprised that some little bad habits might be exposing you to nasty germs.

Here are a few culprits that could be undermining your health.

Pressing elevator buttons

That elevator button at your place of work or your apartment building harbours harmful bacteria. According to a 2014 study in Open Medicine journal, 61 per cent of elevator buttons in three Toronto hospitals were colonized with bacteria. Toilets in the hospitals were also swabbed. You can probably guess where this is going: The toilet surfaces had significantly less bacteria than elevator buttons at 43 per cent. If you must touch the button with bare fingers, wash your hands after the elevator trip, or use your elbow, or even a pen cap to touch the buttons.

Being within six feet of someone with a cold

Although it may feel a bit rude, it's almost a natural instinct to edge away from someone sneezing or coughing rampantly. That instinct is correct and, actually, the distance you need is not only arm's length, it's further. Six feet, or two metres, is the proper distance to keep away from individuals infected with the flu and colds, according to public health officials.

Touching your face

Wiping crumbs off your lips, scratching your cheek or even resting a chin in your hand are all ways you are physically depositing germs near your mouth and nose. Chances are you touch your face many times in a day without even thinking twice about it. Public health experts say you should always wash your hands before touching your face. That's not always practical, so if you can't get to a sink, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer. Be sure to rub the sanitizer over the tips of your fingers, not just around the palms of your hands.

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PARIS IN 24 HOURS

Hidden gems in the City of Lights

Explore Paris through its neighbourhoods

Skip the Louvre and Eiffel Tower and explore the City of Lights the way it's meant to be explored: By wandering its neighbourhoods.

WHAT TO DO

Paris is divided into 20 arrondissements, or neighbourhoods, which have their own distinct identity. But unless you have weeks to spare, it's best to pick a few rather than try to see everything — you will quickly wear out the soles of your shoes.

The Marais, for example, is known as Old Paris, with some of the city's oldest buildings among its winding streets, but it's home to hip boutiques, cafés and art galleries. The Latin Quarter, on the left bank, is one of the oldest neighbourhoods in Paris with historical brasseries, while St. Germain-des-Pres, once a bohemian mecca, is now home to high-end shops and famous cafés, such as Café Flore and Les Deux Magots.

Well worth exploring is the neighbourhood of Montmartre, which sits on a hill overlooking Paris. You can get a sense of historic Paris as you wander away from the crowds at Place du Tertre and get lost in the steep, cobbled streets. Though it's crowded at night, it's worth sticking around to watch the sunset from Sacré-Coeur Basilica at the top of the hill, where you will hear the locals singing and strumming guitars.

Avoid famous Père Lachaise Cemetery and head to Montmartre Cemetery — a reprieve from the bustle of busy Paris streets — where you will walk in solitude along shady paths lined with maple and chestnut trees to find the graves of Edgar Degas and Alexandre Dumas.

If you aren't keen on getting lost in the streets of Paris, consider a walking tour. Paris Walks, for example, offers a range of options from Paris during the Second World War to Hemingway's Paris. Or try a chocolate-tasting tour, where you will be introduced to the city's top chocolatiers.

Instead of the Louvre, head to the Orangerie — a small, but stunning gallery that houses Claude Monet's the Nymphéas (Water Lilies) displayed in twin oval rooms. For more modern art, go on a graffiti-viewing tour along the Canal Saint-Martin, an up-and-coming neighbourhood with plenty of shops and restaurants.

WHERE TO EAT

The list of cafés, bistros and restaurants in Paris could fill the pages of a book, but a rule of thumb is to avoid places with an English-language sandwich board out front.

While in Paris, order the steak-frites (a Parisian staple) or, if you can handle raw meat, try the beef tartare. Some neighbourhood bistros serve up French classics in an affordable, casual atmosphere (such as Bistrot Paul Bert); look for a prix-fixe menu. Or splurge at a Michelin-starred restaurant, such as Guy Savoy.

If you are watching your waistline, Paris can be torture with its artisan boulangers, creperies and patisseries. It's hard to resist those chewy baguettes and melt-in-your-mouth pain au chocolate. Paris is also the capital of dark chocolate; look for single-sourced MOF chocolatiers (MOF is the highest ranking in the French culinary world).

In Paris, there's no need to eat all your meals in a restaurant — head to a cheese shop (try Laurent Dubois), pick up a bottle of wine and picnic in one of Paris's many parks, such as elegant Parc Monceau. Or head to the Rodin Museum, where you can enjoy a baguette on an outdoor terrace surrounded by rose gardens and Rodin's famous sculptures.

With so much to see and eat in its diverse arrondissements, Paris is worth a visit any time of year — and you will want to go back again and again.

Plan your Parisian getaway today and discover your own hidden gems. As Audrey Hepburn says in the classic film Sabrina, "Paris is always a good idea."

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NHL

Vegas halfway to goal in ticket drive

Las Vegas appears well on its way to showing the NHL that it deserves an expansion team.

Bill Foley
GETTY IMAGES

Less than 48 hours into its season-ticket drive, Hockey Vision Las Vegas says it is already halfway to the goal of 10,000 deposits.

"We are off to a great start," prospective owner Bill Foley said in a statement. "It is our hope that the Las Vegas community will continue to rally around this incredible initiative. We've seen an outpouring of support, and we know Southern Nevadans will continue to place deposits to help us demonstrate that Las Vegas can support its first major-league sports franchise."

THE CANADIAN PRESS

NBA

"He's not relaxing. He wants to win, and he wants to try and win big. That's what he wants, and he's not just any player but your point guard, your lead player."

Raptors general manager Masai Ujiri on Toronto's lone all-star representative at this weekend's festivities in New York City. Lowry is averaging a career-high 18.8 points a game, and continues to endear himself to fans with his heart and hustle.

Homan homing in on Scotties 3-peat

Curling. Strong field stands in way of Ottawa rink winning another national championship

Rachel Homan is aiming to become the fourth curler to skip a team to three straight national women's titles.
ANDREW VAUGHAN/THE CANADIAN PRESS FILE

Rachel Homan is looking to join a select list of women's curlers who have skipped their teams to three straight national titles.

Standing in her way is a strong field at the Scotties Tournament of Hearts, which includes the last woman to accomplish the rare three-peat — reigning Olympic champion Jennifer Jones of Manitoba.

Val Sweeting, who lost to Homan in last year's final at Montreal, will represent Alberta, three-time Canada Cup champion Stefanie Lawton of Saskatchewan will skip the host province entry and five-time Scotties champion Mary-Anne Arsenault will represent Nova Scotia.

"Nothing is guaranteed," Homan said. "There are so many good teams at the Scotties and so much talent, it's definitely going to be a fight in every game for us to win."

Main draw competition begins Saturday at Mosaic Place. Other confirmed entries include Patti Knezevic of B.C., Julie Hastings of Ontario, Quebec's Lauren Mann, Prince Edward Island's Suzanne Birt, Heather Strong of Newfoundland and Labrador and New Brunswick's Sylvie Robichaud.

Homan is aiming to join Jones (2008-10), Colleen Jones (01-04) and Vera Pezer (1971-73) as the only curlers who have skipped their rinks to three straight national women's titles.

The Team Canada entry has a different look this season.

Homan, third Emma Miskew and lead Lisa Weagle added second Joanne Courtney from Sweeting's team as a replacement for Alison Kreviazuk, who left the rink to be with her boyfriend in Sweden.

"It feels like she's been on the team for longer than a year now, it's been really good," Homan said of her new teammate.

In addition, coach Earle Morris ended his long run with Homan's side to coach his son's team this season. Richard Hart, who plays for Team Glenn Howard, will handle coaching duties for the defending champions at the Scotties.

The Scotties winner will represent Canada at the March 14-22 world women's curling championship in Sapporo, Japan. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Rankings

3rd

Homan sits currently third behind Jones and Sweeting in this season's national rankings.

4 SPORTS

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Hockey greatness in Cox's bloodline

WHL. League-leading scorer is a descendent of Stanley Cup winner and hall of famer

Trevor Cox never met his legendary great-grandfather Fred (Cyclone) Taylor, but he has adopted some of his on-ice traits.

Like his famous ancestor, the 19-year-old Medicine Hat Tigers centre can rack up points with regularity. Cox leads the WHL in scoring by a wide margin with 23 goals, 69 assists and 92 points.

"From what I hear, he was a great skater and one of my biggest assets is my skating ability and my speed," said Cox, a Surrey, B.C., native who is in his fourth season with the Tigers. "That'd probably be the one (similar) thing that stands out. I'd say I'm a skilled player. Obviously a good skill set seemed to come down the (family) line, and I was fortunate to get a pretty good skill set."

Cyclone Taylor, regarded as one of Canada's first and all-time hockey greats, starred in the formative years of professional hockey. He won Stanley Cup titles with the Ottawa Senators (1909) and Vancouver Millionaires (1915) and earned selection to the Hockey Hall of Fame in 1947.

"Hockey, it's just been in-bred in me, and I've been very fortunate to be raised in such a great hockey family," said Cox.

Despite his puckhandling pedigree, Cox, who is listed at five-foot-eight and 164 pounds, was not chosen in last summer's NHL draft. But he will have a second — and final chance — at selection this year.

"Obviously, one of the knocks against me is my size, and it'll always be a knock," said Cox. "But I've just got to work on, I guess, proving people wrong — and keep improving every day."

The Tigers have a firm hold on second place in the Eastern Conference.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

'Hard to ignore'

Medicine Hat general manager and coach Shaun Clouston believes Cox can excel as a pro despite the NHL's tendency to draft bigger players, noting that several smaller skaters are shining right now.

- "It's hard to ignore the numbers that he's putting up," said Clouston. "He's had steady improvement. Those are good signs when you're looking at projecting players."

What Trevor Cox lacks in size — he's listed at 5-8 and 164 pounds — he makes up for in speed and skating ability. The Medicine Hat Tigers centre has a comfortable scoring lead with 92 points. DEREK LEUNG/GETTY IMAGES

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Golden slumbers for king Kingsbury

Canadians, from left, Marc-Antoine Gagnon (bronze), Mikael Kingsbury (gold) and Philippe Marquis (silver) swept the men's dual moguls final of the FIS freestyle ski and snowboard world championship last month in Kreischberg, Austria. LARS BARON/GETTY IMAGES

Freestyle skiing.
Young ace and his teammates are prone to sleepwalking due to sport's travel demands

Mikael Kingsbury and Canada's freestyle ski team work so hard that sleepwalking has become a hazard.

Kingsbury, from Deux-Montagnes, Que., is thriving in the demanding World Cup schedule as he closes in on his fourth straight Crystal Globe as the best freestyle skier in the world this season. Even with his focus on the next race, Kingsbury occasionally gets distracted by bouts of somnambulism.

"When we were going to the world championships, one of my teammates, Marc-Antoine Gagnon, sleepwalked on the plane. He was asleep, he had his mask on and he was dreaming that he was getting attacked by bees," said Kingsbury with a laugh on Wednesday. "He got out of his seat and started running through the aisles, started climbing up on people in the plane. Someone had to wake him up."

Added Kingsbury: "A couple of years ago I broke my toe before a race while sleepwalking. We're big sleepwalkers on our team. We're too tired because we don't have a time zone. We're in Japan, we're in Europe, back in America, back to Japan, back to Europe. We travel a lot." It may be a tiring lifestyle, but Kingsbury enjoys it.

"It's worth it. It's fun. I've been travelling like this since I was 17, 18 years old, around the world. There's not a lot of people my age who've seen the planet like I have. We're lucky to travel like that," said the 22-year-old Kingsbury. "We're living the dream. Some of my friends wanted to play in the NHL, but I always wanted to be a World Cup skier and win medals and be one of the best skiers in the world."

Kingsbury could make that goal by the end of the season. He's already the most successful Canadian moguls skier ever with 26 World Cup victories, and he's just two wins away from tying the all-time record, held by France's Edgar Grospiron.

"When I'm skiing I'm not thinking about that," said Kingsbury, while acknowledging that matching Grospiron would be a special accomplishment. "I'm a guy that likes records, they keep me motivated. I can write my name in the history books."

"One thing at a time, though. This isn't my focus. It's just a fun thing." The Olympic silver medallist has only improved since the Sochi Games, winning his fifth straight World Cup on Saturday. He's got a sizable lead in the overall standings with 529 points, well ahead of Russia's Alexandr Smyshlyaev (281) with three events left.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Perk of the job

"There's not a lot of people my age who've seen the planet like I have. We're lucky to travel like that."

Canadian World Cup skier Mikael Kingsbury

The numbers add up.

President's Choice FINANCIAL

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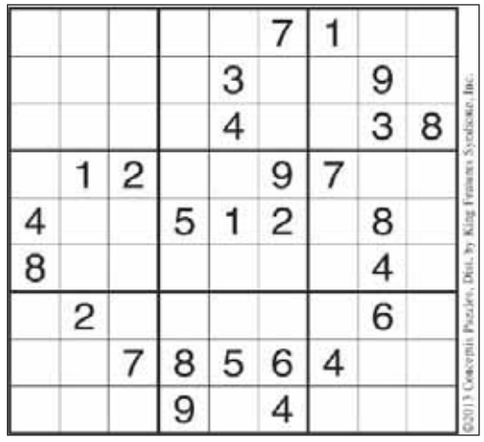
Conceptis Sudoku by Dave Green

How to play

Fill in the grid, so that every row, every column and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1-9. There is no math involved.



Yesterday's Sudoku

8	4	6	5	9	7	1	2	3
7	3	9	8	2	1	4	5	6
5	2	1	3	4	6	7	8	9
9	5	8	6	7	3	2	4	1
4	6	7	9	1	2	8	3	5
3	1	2	4	5	8	6	9	7
1	7	3	2	8	5	9	6	4
6	8	4	7	3	9	5	1	2
2	9	5	1	6	4	3	7	8

See for yourself.

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Horoscopes by Sally Brompton

♈ Aries
March 21 - April 20

You will notice things today that people have overlooked. But don't expect many thanks when you point out what they have missed. Some people just do not want to be told anything.

♉ Taurus
April 21 - May 21

You will see something to your advantage over the next 24 hours, something that can have a positive effect on your career. You will recognize it as soon as you see it.

♊ Gemini
May 22 - June 21

Don't accept things just because the "experts" tell you they are true. All too often the "experts" are actually nothing of the sort.

♋ Cancer
June 22 - July 23

Don't give up on something just because it does not seem to be working out the way you intended. That applies doubly if you have spent a lot of money on it. Give it time and you will eventually see a return on your investment.

♌ Leo
July 24 - Aug. 23

It might be tempting to stick your nose in someone's business today but if you do you will likely regret it, especially if they know something about you that could be embarrassing.

♍ Virgo
Aug. 24 - Sept. 23

Don't push yourself over the next 24 hours. Loved ones will happily share the burden of what you want done today, so spread the load. Work-wise, make this a day of planning.

♎ Libra
Sept. 24 - Oct. 23

You will find it easy to forgive others' mistakes today but not so easy to forgive your own. You have set such high standards for yourself there are bound to be times when you cannot live up to them.

♏ Scorpio
Oct. 24 - Nov. 22

Information will come your way today that makes you wonder if some of the things you have been led to believe are true. It may upset you to discover that you have been misled.

♐ Sagittarius
Nov. 23 - Dec. 21

One way or another you must get your message across. Hopefully people will stop what they are doing and listen but, if not, grab hold of them and yell at them. They will hear you.

♑ Capricorn
Dec. 22 - Jan. 20

You seem to know just the right thing to say to get people on your side. Make that work in your favour today, especially when dealing with money. Your way with words could make you, and save you, a pile of cash

♒ Aquarius
Jan. 21 - Feb. 19

Now that Mercury, planet of the mind, is moving in your favour again your head should be full of ideas. Take the initiative and start something new.

♓ Pisces
Feb. 20 - March 20

If you need to be alone with your thoughts by all means go off on your own for a while. You don't have to make excuses to those who were hoping for the pleasure of your company. It's good to keep them wanting more.

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Yesterday's Crossword

Online

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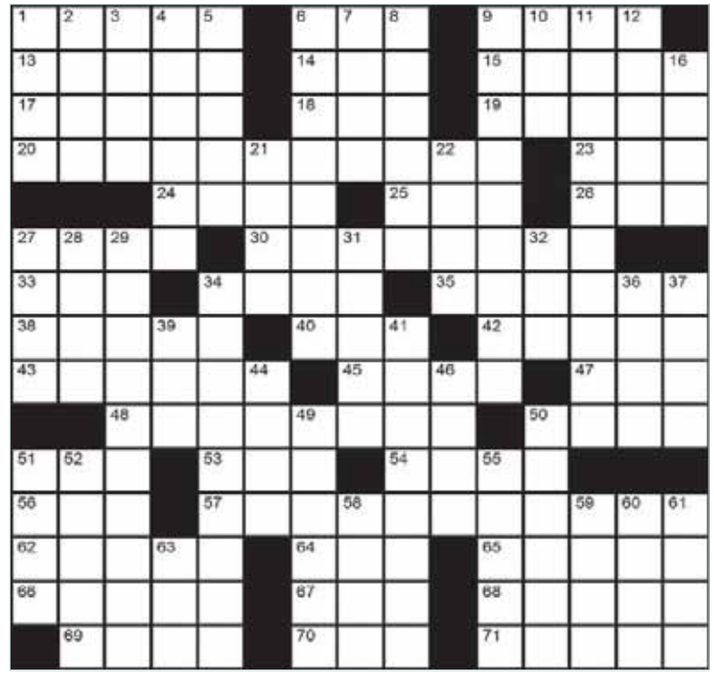
Crossword: Canada Across and Down by Kelly Ann Buchanan



Across

1. "Cheers" character
6. Slangy put down
9. Church's vaulted part
13. Pantheon of Norse gods
14. Cousin on classic TV
15. Ringed and Harp
17. Fend, __ off
18. 'RCMP', e.g.
19. Birth a bovine
20. Shania Twain hit: 3 wds.
23. Neckwear
24. Texas city
25. Mr. Morrison
26. Sugar amt.
27. Goblins
30. Brewing company, __-Busch
33. Paddle
34. Ore deposit
35. Water down
38. "Oh __ _ Feeling": Hit for Hamilton band Crowbar
40. As written
42. Mr. Wilde
43. Freddy __ (Music bigwig who was Madonna's manager for several years)
45. Tibia's locale
47. Josh
48. Exaltee's elevation
50. Castaway's refuge
51. Deed
53. __-Cat (Ski hill machine)
54. Demeanor
56. Thames toilet
57. Non front-row-sitting person in Parliament
62. Thrust
64. Comparative suffix
65. Celebrity chef Guy
66. Ringo Who?
67. Neil Young's "I ___ Child"
68. "__ __ to Be You"
69. America's Maritime Guardian org.
70. Myrna of movies
71. Branch beds

Down

1. Wallet stuff
2. Actor Jared
3. "This __ __ unexpected surprise!"
4. Journalist's basic questions: wd. + li'l bit more
5. Norse goddess of love
6. "The Stroll" by Canadian quartet The __
7. Longing
8. Endeavoured
9. Space mission mystery on the CBC
10. The Princess and the __
11. Familiar sights on Winter roads: 2 wds.
12. Canadian skating great Mr. Stojko
16. Permeate
21. Flight-related UN Agency headquartered in Montreal [acronym]
22. Lucy Montgomery link (Canuck writer)
27. "__ you do that?"
28. South Dakota dam
29. National Basketball League of Canada team: wd. + li'l bit more
31. Professional thief's operation
32. Chicago trains
34. TSN: Canadian sports broadcaster Michael
36. Follow the car
37. Earth: German
39. __ kwon do
41. Denim-look shirt material
44. "99 Luftballons" by __
46. Eurythmics' "Would _ __ to You?"
49. Tea party, for one
50. Instigate
51. Shakespeare: __ Well That Ends Well
52. Jean __ (Quebec pharmacy chain)
55. Finally, in Montreal
58. Westerns: __ Sabe (The Lone Ranger, to Tonto)
59. Devious chuckles
60. 'E' in QED
61. Frees
63. RCMP's French acronym

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